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HISTORY of CHINA



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Modern
HISTORY
of
CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

Chronologically, modern history covers the time from the bourgeois revolution in mid-17th-century England, which gave birth to the capitalist system in Europe, to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, which rang in the new, socialist era. The substance of modern history is that it saw the end of feudalism and the rise and development of capitalism, the last of the antagonistic social-economic systems.

In China, as in most Asian, African, and Latin American countries, the passage to the capitalist mode of production began much later than in Holland, England, and other European states. Throughout China's modern history, even later, feudal relations continued to predominate. Still, by the turn of the 20th century, the elements of the capitalist mode of production that had issued forth in the depths of the feudal order developed into a system of capitalist relationships that conflicted violently with the feudal Manchu-Chinese pattern of rule and the colonial oppression of imperialist powers. The central event in China's modern history was the bourgeois Xinhai revolution of 1911 which swept out the Qing monarchy and led to the formal establishment of a republican system. Like the revolutions in Persia and Turkey, the Xinhai revolution was a highlight in Asia's awakening that began after the first Russian revolution of 1905. It placed China in the stream of the world democratic movement.

The conquest of Ming dynasty China by the Manchus, a small nation of Jurchid origin inhabiting the northern part of Liaodong Peninsula, coincided with the time conventionally recognised as the beginning of the modern period in world history—the 1640s. In 1644 Manchu generals crossed the border into China, captured Beijing (Peking), and installed a Manchu dynasty on the Dragon Throne. The conquest was made easy for the Manchus by the anti-national policy of the Chinese feudal lords who had invited them to help put down the peasant rebellion of Li Zicheng and Zhang

Xianzhong. But the spread of Manchu rule to the rest of China took many more years, encountering desperate Chinese (Han) resistance.

The collusion of the invaders and the Chinese feudalists against the working masses was the class foundation on which the Manchus built their rule over China in the next nearly 268 years.

China's modern history examined in this volume by a team of Soviet Sinologists ends with the events of 1918-1919, which were a reaction of various segments of Chinese society to the socialist revolution in Russia. By that time, China had become politically, economically, and militarily dependent on the imperialist powers.

The capitalist mode of production was still a negligible element of the national economy. Though the rising Chinese bourgeoisie, backed by the mass of the people, had overthrown Manchu rule and abolished the monarchist system in 1912, it had not yet broken its links with the feudal gentry. Besides, it was in deadly fear of the workers and peasants, of their revolutionary mood. It nourished illusions about the good intentions of the imperialist powers, and saw no way of establishing an independent bourgeois state. A sense of impotence and pessimism reigned in its midst. The country was in deep crisis, racked by the endless strife of the feudal warlords, goaded against each other by rival imperialist states. Not until May 1919, under the impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution, did a nationwide wave of protests against the reactionary warlords and imperialist colonial policy open a new stage in the struggle for democracy and national liberation. This culminated in the victory of the democratic revolution and the establishment of a sovereign state, the People's Republic of China, in 1949.

Prior to the emergence on the political scene of the rising Chinese bourgeoisie and of landowners whose economic interests were tied to the internal and international markets, the main burden of the struggle against the feudal Qing regime was borne by the Chinese peasantry. It was led by numerous but disunited anti-Manchu secret societies, many of which were controlled by *shenshi* elements. (*Shenshi*, the scholar gentry, were the educated section of the feudalist class formally qualified by examinations for official service or public office.)

The working class, which appeared on the scene in the latter half of the 19th century, had not yet coalesced into an independent political force. So, in the early 20th century, when an organised bourgeois revolutionary movement came into motion, the mass of peasants and soldiers, and working people in the towns, were still the chief motor of the struggle against the Manchus. Their overthrow, in fact, resulted from the merger at the end of 1911 and in early 1912, of four currents: the spontaneous action of the peasants, workers, artisans, and urban poor; the bourgeois revolutionary movement;

the movement of bourgeois and landlord liberals for a constitutional monarchy, and the national liberation struggles of non-Han peoples forcibly incorporated in the Qing Empire. The tenuous alliance was short-lived. The replacement of the monarchy with a republican regime failed to make conditions any more favourable for the development of capitalism. China remained under the sway of feudal warlords and reactionary compradores. At the junction of modern and contemporary history we find it a backward semicolonial state wholly dependent on foreign imperialist powers.

In this volume, the modern history of China is divided into four chronological periods—1644 to 1839; 1840 to 1895; 1896 to 1905, and 1906 to 1919. Accordingly, it consists of four parts: 1) The Feudal Qing Empire in the 17th and 18th Centuries, 2) The Penetration of Capitalist Powers into China. The Peasant Wars and the Risings of Non-Han Peoples, 3) The Qing Empire: a Semicolony of the Imperialist Powers, and the Beginning of the National Liberation Struggle, and 4) The Overthrow of Qing Rule and the Establishment of the Republic of China.

The third and fourth parts, dealing with Chinese history in the imperialist era (essential for understanding the specificity of the country's contemporary history) comprise the bigger portion of the volume. The first part, covering the period from 1644 to 1839, or about 200 years, deals with the installation and consolidation of the Manchu feudalists. It examines the principal processes of the late feudal period in Chinese society, the political system, and the internal and foreign policies of the Qing regime. As in the subsequent three parts, the main attention is concentrated on the class struggle, on the actions of peasants and artisans against feudal exploitation and against the Qing's foreign conquests.

The second part deals with the penetration into the Qing Empire of British and French capital, and with the causes and consequences of the Opium Wars. The central place is devoted to the peasant war of the Taipings, and to the accompanying rebellions of non-Han peoples forcibly incorporated in the Qing Empire. A study is made, too, of the 'self-strengthening' policy of the country's ruling element to buttress the feudal order.

The third part concerns the new bourgeois public forces and their political organisations in the semicolonial country, and the spontaneous struggles of the working people against the Manchus and against imperialist aggression.

The fourth and concluding part is devoted to the central event in China's modern history—the bourgeois Xinhai revolution of 1911, which deposed the Qing dynasty and proclaimed a republic. The period after the revolution, when power in the country was seized by feudal warlord Yuan Shikai and his successors of the Beiyang

clique that had involved China in World War I under imperialist pressure, is also examined.

The volume ends with a depiction of events directly preceding the May Fourth Movement of 1919 which, strictly speaking, transcends the limits of modern history and reaches into the contemporary period.

Brief biographical sketches are given of peasant leaders Li Xiucheng, Hong Xiuquan and Zhang Luoxing, of Dr. Sun Yatsen and his associates, of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Zhang Jian, and other leaders of the bourgeois and landed gentry's movement for reform and constitutional government, and of the participants in the Wuchang rising of October 1911 which overthrew the Qing regime in Central China.

There are also profiles of Manchu emperors and empresses, court dignitaries, provincial officials, and the warlords Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Yuan Shikai.

Two chapters are devoted to China's economic situation at crucial junctures of its modern history. They provide the background to the emergence and growth of the capitalist mode of production and the activity of new social forces, and show the causes of the country's glaring social and economic backwardness and the abject poverty of the mass of the people, which also prevailed at later stages in China's history. A special chapter at the end of the volume deals with modern Chinese literature.

Descriptions are given of specifically Chinese social phenomena and processes, such as warlordism, the genesis of the compradore bourgeoisie and the overseas Chinese communities, of secret societies, provincial separatism and localism, the part played by *shenshi* elements in the patriotic struggles, the impact of utopian peasant egalitarianism, the feudalist Confucian ideology which underlay the monarchic regime for over two millennia, and the processes that led to the formation of the Chinese nation.

The authors show a close interest in the internal social processes, while China's international relations and foreign policy are accorded secondary treatment.¹

The Manchu and Chinese feudal lords fought bloody wars of conquest against the Mongol Khalkha principalities, the Russian settlements on the Amur, the Dzungar Khanate, and the peoples of Eastern Turkestan, Tibet, Burma, and Vietnam. The Qing government (and the 'republican' governments that succeeded it) treated subject non-Han peoples with coarse brutality. Again and again, the Mongol, Uighur, Kazakh, Dungan, Zhuang, Miao, and other peoples rose in revolt against their oppressors, and on a few occasions non-Han peasants joined the Chinese peasantry in assaults on the hated Manchu regime.

The history of most of the non-Han peoples inhabiting the Qing Empire and the Republic of China is insufficiently studied, and its presentation in this volume is, therefore, fairly limited. The main thrust is on the history of the Chinese (Han) nation.

China's influence on the politics, economy, and culture of the neighbouring Asian states of Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Japan, on the states of Europe, and on the United States of America, is not examined. This influence was considerable and ought to be taken into account in determining China's place in the social process of modern times. The idealised accounts of Confucian philosophy and the rule of the early Qing emperors, brought back to Europe by Catholic missionaries, were used by the French encyclopaedists in their attack on the medieval order and clerical reaction, and motivated their appeals for government by 'philosopher-kings' who would, they held, lay the ground for the triumph of reason. Their idea amounted to government by members of the third estate. Imitating Chinese architecture and art was fashionable at the courts of 'enlightened' European 17th- and 18th-century monarchs, and a specific style, *chinoiserie*, evolved in European art.

The China trade brought Britain (and the United States, France, Holland, Portugal, Sweden, and other countries) fabulous profits, contributing considerably to the growth of capitalism. The rivalry for the Chinese market was extremely keen. Angered by the excessive tax on tea shipped from China in 1773, the people of Boston boarded the British tea ships in the harbour and cast overboard 342 chests of tea. This event, known as the Boston Tea Party, was a major landmark in the American colonies' fight for independence. Britain's foreign policy was strongly influenced by the traders and manufacturers of Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham, who had forged to prominence through the China trade. British, German, French, and American manufacturers lined their pockets selling arms and naval vessels to the Chinese. Western and Japanese bankers, industrialists, and traders made huge fortunes from railway construction and mining concessions in China, and from loans to that country. Foreign industries, which sprang up in China towards the close of the 19th century, were another major source of profit. Hong Kong and Macao, seized from China by the British and Portuguese, have remained colonies and are still yielding huge profits to their masters. United States policy was strongly influenced by members of various missionary organisations active in China since the late 19th century. Among the last prominent representatives of this peculiar social group was the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Chinese coolies shipped to America by dealers in 'yellow slaves' following the discovery of gold in California in the 1840s contribut-

ed to the economic development of the Pacific seaboard of the United States.

The short-sighted policies of the Qing rulers, who bowed to the British, French, and Americans in the mid-19th century, and who could not cope with the rebellious Chinese peasantry without foreign aid, were taken as an earnest warning by the new social forces in Japan, who were inclined to safeguard the country's independence and carry out overdue bourgeois reforms.

The Qing rulers interfered time and again in the internal affairs of the neighbouring states of Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam, thus exerting a direct influence on their history.

The anti-feudal class struggle in modern China was spearheaded against the Manchu administration. In fact, their anti-Manchu nationalism prevented the new social forces from seeing the chief evils and from coming to grips with the feudal order and the colonialist incursions of the imperialist powers.

The propaganda of patriotic, anti-Manchu ideas was, by and large, accompanied with the propagation of Chinese great-power nationalism, chauvinism, and xenophobia. This led to the revival and spread of doctrines dating to China's ancient and medieval history, asserting the superiority of the Chinese to all other peoples, and seeing China—the Middle Kingdom or Celestial Empire as the fulcrum of the world surrounded on all sides by barbarians.

This Great-Han chauvinism diverted the country's new social forces from battling to abolish the feudal order and liberating the country from colonial dependence. For them the Qing dynasty was the sole culprit of all evil. Not until the overthrow of Manchu rule—under the impact of World War I and the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia—and the installation in power of various feudal warlord cliques did the bourgeois nationalism of the Chinese take on an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist complexion. But even in the period of contemporary history, it distracted the labouring mass of the people from fighting for social emancipation, bred contempt for the lessons of the international revolutionary movement, and inspired exaggerated praise of everything Chinese, indiscriminate disparagement of everything foreign, and the conservation of old, reactionary traditions.

In their study of China's modern history, the authors took guidance in the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism: Marx, Engels, and Lenin had not only established methodological guidelines for progressive historical research, but also produced a set of incisive evaluations of the social-political processes in China's modern history.

We find Marx and Engels responding to such crucial events in China's modern history as the Taiping peasant war and the Opium Wars. They stigmatised the corruption and backwardness of the Qing

Empire, which they described as a 'stronghold of arch-conservatism', blaming the benighted state of the Chinese people on the Manchu-Chinese feudal rulers. They referred with deep sympathy to the heroic struggles of the Chinese people against their Manchu oppressors, and to their patriotic resistance to the British and French colonialists.

Marx produced a number of penetrating portrayals of the contemporary political regime in China. In an article in *The New York Daily Tribune* of 14 June 1853 (entitled 'Revolution in China and in Europe'), he examined the social causes of the 'chronic rebellions subsisting in China for about ten years past' and assuming 'religious, dynastic, or national shape'. He noted that 'complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of Old China'. Marx observed that 'hatred against foreigners and their exclusion from the Empire, once the mere result of China's geographical and ethnographical situation, have become a political system only since the conquest of the country by the race of the Manchu Tartars'. Looking into the sources of isolationism in the Manchu rulers' dealings with the West, Marx wrote: 'There can be no doubt that the turbulent dissensions among the European nations who, at the later end of the 17th century, rivaled each other in the trade with China, lent a mighty aid to the exclusive policy adopted by the Manchus. But more than this was done by the fear of the new dynasty, lest the foreigners might favour the discontent existing among a large proportion of the Chinese during the first half century or thereabouts of their subjection to the Tartars.'² Marx called attention to the resemblance between the policy of the Qing and that of the Hapsburgs, who ruthlessly suppressed revolutionary actions in the multinational Austrian Empire.

A number of striking studies of the social, political, and economic system in China in the imperialist era, the concluding period of Qing rule, is found in the works of Lenin. In his very first work on China, 'The War in China', which appeared in the first issue of *Iskra* in December 1900, Lenin noted in scathing terms that the Chinese people, like the Russians, were suffering from 'an Asiatic government that squeezes taxes from the starving peasantry and that suppresses every aspiration towards liberty by military force'.³

In an article, 'Democracy and Narodism in China', which he wrote in June 1912, Lenin described Chinese society on the eve of the Xinhai revolution: 'The objective conditions of China, a backward, agricultural, semi-feudal country numbering nearly 500 million people, place on the order of the day only one specific, historically distinctive form of this oppression and exploitation, namely, feudalism. Feudalism was based on the predominance of agriculture and natural economy. The source of the feudal exploitation of the

Chinese peasant was his *attachment* to the land in some form. The political exponents of this exploitation were the feudal lords, all together and individually, with the emperor as the head of the whole system.¹⁴

Lenin closely followed the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people against their oppressors. He assessed the nature and the motive forces of the 1911 revolution, and examined the historic significance of the programme of Sun Yatsen, whom he described as a democrat of noble feelings and abounding in heroism. Lenin wrote the text of the resolution in which the Russian Communists gathered at the Prague Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party welcomed the victory of the Chinese revolutionaries.

The modern history group of the China Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies (U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences) worked on the monograph for a number of years. Studying the various phases in China's modern history, they produced and published the following works: *Sinhaiskaya revoliutsia v Kitaye* (The Xinhai Revolution in China), Moscow, 1962; *Manzhurskoye vladychestvo v Kitaye* (Manchu Rule in China), Moscow, 1966; *Sun Yatsen. Sbornik statei k 100-letiyu so dnia rozhdenia* (Sun Yatsen. Collection of Articles on His Centenary), Moscow, 1966; collections of documents on the Taiping Rebellion, the Yihetuan uprising, and the Xinhai revolution. They also produced chapters on China for the *Khrestomatiya po novoi istorii* (Anthology on Modern History), the memoirs of Pu Yi, the last of the Chinese emperors (translated from the Chinese into Russian), and so on. In addition, some members of the group have published monographs on specific periods in China's modern history.

Much source material was studied, as listed in the Bibliography.

The volume consists of 18 chapters. Part I was written by A. N. Khokhlov, Cand. Hist. (the account of the conquest of Khalkha in Chapter 1 was prepared with the help of I. S. Ermachenko, Cand. Hist.). The authors of Part II are V. P. Ilyushechkin, Dr. Hist. (chapters 4, 5, 6), S. L. Tikovinsky, Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences (Chapter 7), A. D. Ipatova, Cand. Hist. (Chapter 3); Part III is by S. L. Tikhvinsky (Chapter 9), L. N. Borokh, Cand. Hist. (Chapter 10), N. M. Kaliuzhnaia, Cand. Hist. (Chapter 11), A. M. Grigoriev, Cand. Hist. (Chapters 12, 13), Y. V. Chudodeyev, Cand. Hist. (Chapter 14, and section on the policy of the ruling camp and the liberal movement in Chapter 13), E. A. Belov, Cand. Hist. (the account of the bourgeois revolutionary movement in Chapter 14), A. S. Kostiaeva, Cand. Hist. (the account of peasant movements in chapters 12, 13, 14), O. E. Nepomnin, Cand. Econ. (Chapter 8); Part IV is by E. A. Belov, Cand. Hist. (Chapter 16), O. E. Nepomnin (chapters 15, 18), A. G. Krymov, Dr.

Hist. (Chapter 17), and V. I. Semanov, Dr. Ling. (Supplement).

The volume is for the general reader. To make it more readable, no references to sources and literature are given in the text (they are listed by chapters at the end of the book). Since the material, in Part I, Chapter 1 is from Russian archives, the dates in the account of Russo-Chinese relations are in the old style.

The index was drawn up by L. N. Borokh, A. S. Kostiaeva, and A. N. Khokhlov. Chinese place names and proper names were checked by A. N. Khokhlov.

The maps were selected by A. S. Kostiaeva. The Bibliography was drawn up by the authors with the assistance of researcher G. I. Gerasimova.

The group of authors and the general editor are grateful to the staff of the China Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies (U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences) for their advice and recommendations. Thanks are also due for his valuable advice to V. N. Nikiforov, Dr. Hist., who reviewed the manuscript.

For the English translation the authors romanised Chinese proper names in accordance with the Pinyin system recently adopted in the People's Republic of China. They also introduced some corrections and additional information. The chapters on China's economic history of the modern period were written anew.

The authors hope that the present volume will contribute to better mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and China.

S. L. Tikhvinsky

Part I

THE FEUDAL QING EMPIRE IN THE 17th AND 18th CENTURIES

Chapter 1

CHINA UNDER MANCHU RULE

In the early 17th century China was an advanced feudal state ruled by the Ming dynasty, which had been put into power in 1368 by popular risings against Mongol rule. In some coastal cities and towns along the Yangzi there were private manufactories. In agriculture, too, wage labour was practised in some parts of the maritime provinces.* The private manufacture and free employment in farming spoke of the inception of new relations of production.

The concentration of landed property in the hands of the feudal gentry, the rising pressure of taxes levied to meet the immense cost of the successive wars against the neighbouring peoples (the Japanese, Mongols, and Manchus), the corruption of central and local administrations, and the impoverishment of the urban and, especially, the rural population, brought on a profound internal crisis. Its first signs appeared in the latter half of the 16th century, and it grew still more acute at the time of the peasant war of 1628-1646 and the Manchu incursions of the 1630s and 40s.

The People Versus the Chinese Feudalists and Manchu Invaders

The feudal oppression of the early 17th century compounded with famine and poverty provoked armed risings of peasants against their taskmasters. The rebels were often joined by urban artisans who

* The census in Xincheng county, Jiangxi province gives some idea of the extent wage labour was practised in farming at the turn of the 17th century. Nine-tenths of the population, as in most other counties and areas, were tillers. Assuming that only adult males (whose names were inscribed on door-tablets below those of the proprietor and the members of his family) were employed, we may estimate that wage labourers constituted 3.66 per cent of the farming population. See *Jiangxi Xincheng xian baojia quantu* (Complete *baojia* count in Xincheng county of Jiangxi province), 1837.

were driven frantic by endless levies. In the 1630s a peasant war erupted in the provinces of Shenxi, Henan, Hubei, Gansu, and Sichuan. Intrepid peasant leaders came to the fore, such as Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong, who headed the main force of the embattled peasantry.

For a number of years the peasants' struggles against the militia raised by local feudal lords and against the Ming troops had alternating success. In 1641-1642, the rebels under Li Zicheng thrice besieged the city of Kaifeng, and thrice failed to capture it. They turned south thrusting into Hubei province and seizing Xiangyang. Here, the rebel leaders conferred and decided to march on the capital Beijing (Peking). In November 1643, Li's troops took Xian (Sian), a large provincial city, and established a new, rebel administration. Promising to parcel out land, to repeal taxes, and to distribute rich men's property among the poor, they won the ardent support of the mass of the people and attracted recruits. Developing the offensive on Beijing, Li's army gained possession of the cities of Taiyuan and Juyongguan, entering Beijing on 25 April 1644.¹ Before their reaching the Forbidden City (Zijincheng), the royal residence, the Ming emperor committed suicide.

After meting out punishment to the top Ming functionaries guilty of hideous crimes, Li set about establishing a new state apparatus. The administrations instituted in the capital and the localities were modelled on the government offices of the old regime. Like the rebel camp as a whole, they were racked by fierce struggles between representatives of the various social groups and classes taking part in the uprising.

Though defeated, the Chinese feudal nobility was farthest from the thought of laying down its arms. Wu Sangui, a prominent military commander whose crack Ming troops were stationed along the Great Wall in the vicinity of Shanhaiguan, appealed for aid to the Manchus, who were poised at the time for one more of their incursions into China's inner regions.

In the 16th century, Manchu tribes descended from the warlike Jurchids living in Liaodong (South Manchuria), outside the Chinese possessions, egged on by the Ming court, waged frequent internecine wars. But with the growth of agriculture, handicrafts and commerce, fairly close economic ties evolved between the tribes, laying the ground for political unification. This began through the efforts of Nuerhaqi (1559-1626), an energetic Manchu general descended from the wealthy clan of Aixinjioruo. After his father's death who, like his grandfather, had been killed by Chinese, Nuerhaqi took to commerce. On his frequent visits to Fushun, where he traded with Chinese and Mongol merchants, the young man gained a more than nodding acquaintance with Chinese literature and warcraft.

He put himself at the head of the Manchu tribal union in the commandery of Jianzhou, and from 1583 on set out to capture neighbouring territories with populations of varied ethnic origin. As the seizures progressed, Nuerhaqi was able to form a fairly strong army. Originally, it consisted of four Manchu banners (or corps), but by 1614 the number of banners grew to eight, and the Manchu troops became known as the eightbanner (*ba qi*) army. In 1618, Nuerhaqi declared himself khan and after the manner of the Jurchids named his state the Jin (Golden).² Following a series of victories over various Ming generals, Nuerhaqi captured Mukden (now Shenyang, administrative centre of North-East China) in 1621, and made it his capital in 1625. Here he set up six central ministries (in 1631) modelled on the six chief government offices of the Ming Empire.³ The young Manchu state grew stronger and stronger. Though gradually gaining the attributes of a feudal society, it retained many of its original tribal features.

Nuerhaqi's successor, his son Abahai, endeavoured to mitigate the Manchu-Chinese contradictions. In 1636, suiting the Chinese example, he proclaimed himself emperor, and gave his state a new name, Qing (Pure).⁴ In 1637, the eightbanner army was reinforced with another eight Mongol corps, to which eight Chinese corps were added in 1643.⁵ By 1644, the Manchu military establishment had at least 200,000 horsemen.

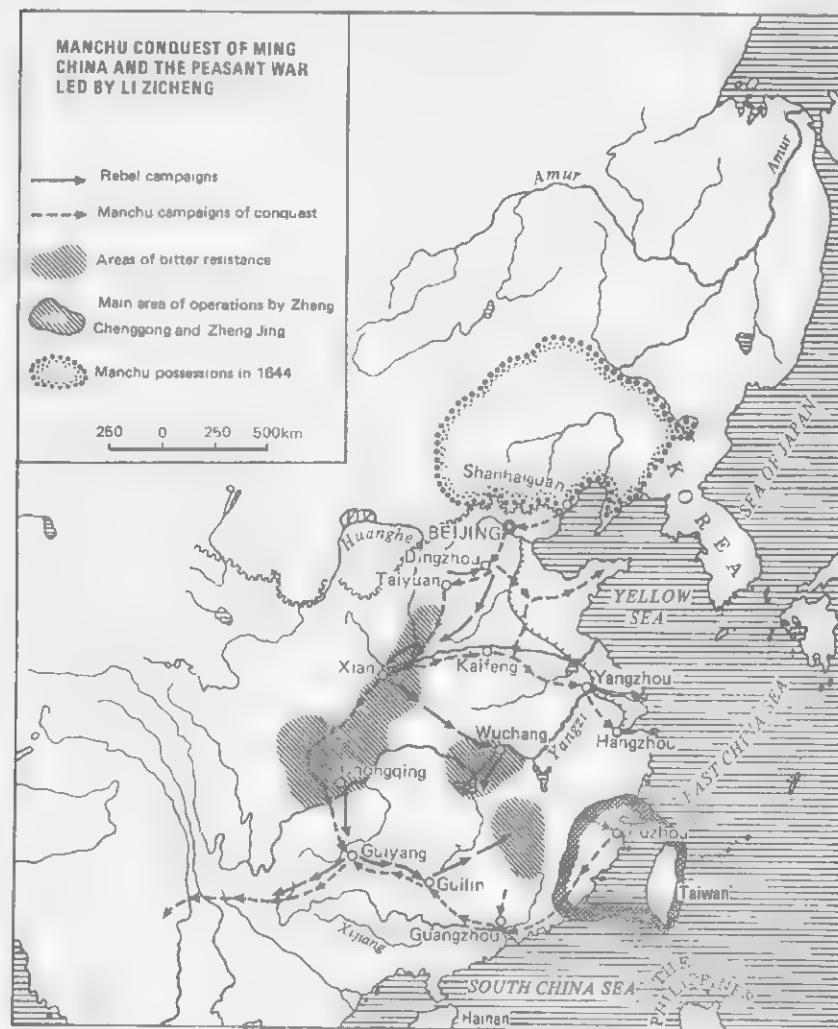
Thrice between 1636 and 1638 Manchu troops made incursions into North China, invading the provinces of Shandong, Henan, and others. Sacking the towns and villages in their path, they took the cattle and horses, and drove tens of thousands of Chinese, chiefly craftsmen and young women, into slavery. To some extent they owed their military success to Chinese generals who, seeing the weakness of the Ming court, defected to the enemy. This was also done by Wu Sangui, who invited the feudal Manchu nobility to help him quell the peasant rebellion in his country. Manchu Prince Duoergun, who had become regent in 1643, feared a trap, and was slow to accept the offer. But Wu's repeated and insistent appeals finally took effect.

Seeking to rally the biggest possible force against the external enemy, the rebel chief Li Zicheng tried in vain to come to terms with Wu Sangui. Spurning the rebel offer, Wu opened passages in the Great Wall for the Manchu horsemen and ordered his men to shave the front of their heads and braid pigtailed at the back like the Manchus, thus demonstrating his submission.

A large battle was fought between Li's rebel army and the joint feudal Manchu and Chinese forces at Shanhaiguan on 27 May 1644. At first, the rebels managed to push back Wu's troops, but a sudden Manchu cavalry attack under Duoergun on their right flank settled

the issue in favour of the superior Manchu force and traitor Wu Sangui.

To preserve his strength, Li decided to abandon Beijing without a fight. Two days later, the Manchus and Wu's troops entered the capital. Five months hence the six-year-old Manchu emperor, Fu Lin, grandson of Nuerhaqi (reign title *Shunzhi*), was brought there from Mukden and installed on the Dragon Throne. Thus, China



Map 1

became the Great Qing State (*Da Qing guo*).⁶

Abandoning the metropolitan province, the peasant army retreated through Shanxi towards Xian (Map 1). Military setbacks whetted the strife among the peasant leaders. The internal disarray and the desertions of their officers gravely damaged the morale of the rebels, who had moreover suffered tremendous casualties.

In October 1644, operating hand in hand with detachments raised by Chinese landlords, the Qing troops suppressed spontaneous peasant risings in the Beijing area, and mounted a fresh offensive. The fierce fighting for Tongguan lasted for more than a month. Here, in a narrow mountain pass, the rebels hoped to halt the Qing troops. But early in 1645 the Manchus and the Chinese feudal lords brought up artillery and finally took possession of the mountain fortress. Running short of food, Li Zicheng ordered his troops to abandon Xian and retreat south. The rebels descended along narrow mountain paths to the Han valley, reached the Yangzi, and captured Wuchang in May 1645. Time and again they were harassed by local landlord detachments, who had grown bolder after the Manchu invasion. From Wuchang, Li's army headed for the city of Tongcheng. Here, in the Jiugongshan mountains (in the south of Hubei province) Li Zicheng was killed in June 1645.

While one Qing column stalked the peasant troops, advancing slowly, with heavy losses, towards Xian, another over-ran most of Shandong province with relative ease. It owed its success largely to the Chinese landlord detachments in the area, which had managed to erode the rebel force. But scattered groups of peasants continued to resist.

Before the crushing defeat of Li Zicheng's forces, the Manchu princes had unavailingly tried to win over the other prominent peasant leader, Zhang Xianzhong, whose troops controlled a sizable part of Sichuan province. Taking advantage of the ebbing of the peasant movement after the Manchu invasion, and especially after the death of Li Zicheng, the local feudal gentry redoubled their terror tactics against the rebels. This stimulated retaliatory moves by Zhang Xianzhong and his followers. With the intention of engaging the Manchus in Shenxi province, they set out north from Chengdu in the summer of 1646. But in December the Manchus intercepted them in the hills of Fenhuangshan (between Xichong and Yanting), and a battle ensued. Taken unawares, the rebels were defeated. Wounded by an enemy arrow, Zhang was captured and executed. This defeat was a defeat for the main forces of the peasant movement.

Having captured North China, the Manchus set out to fortify their political and economic positions. The inhabitants of the northern section of Beijing were given ten days to leave, and the bulk

of the eightbanner army was given quarters in the vacated district. Manchu princes, commanders and warriors were granted parcels of land around the capital. Thereupon, the Qing court acknowledged the right of the Chinese feudalists to participate in government, winning a large section of them in the capital and the provinces to its side. Furthermore, it repealed some of the more burdensome taxes levied in the latter years of the Ming dynasty. Soon, the Qing set about extending their rule to the rest of China.

When word of the capture of Beijing by Li Zicheng's troops and the subsequent Manchu invasion reached the southern capital, Nanjing (Nanking), where many Ming dignitaries from the North had flocked for shelter, a scrimmage ensued for the imperial throne. One of the Ming princes, whose father had been killed by rebel peasants in Xian, seized power. Patriotic feudal lords in the new Ming government wanted to solicit the allegiance of Korea (which had admitted defeat in a war against the Manchus in 1627) and to mount a campaign against the Manchus. Shi Kefa, a military commander, was a zealous advocate of this idea. But the local gentry and the Ming nobility had Shi Kefa and his supporters removed from Nanjing.

In the spring of 1645, Qing troops marching from Shenxi crossed the Huanghe. One column headed for the Huaihe river, while another entered the Grand Canal area and captured Suizhou. Instead of rallying its forces to head off the Manchus, the Ming government despatched its troops against a rebel Chinese general. The Qing army crossed the Huaihe unmolested, and headed for Yangzhou. For ten days, the city populace and the local garrison resisted bravely. The enraged Manchus sought vengeance by slaughtering soldiers and townsmen, and peasants from the neighbouring villages, and sacking the ancient city. The butchery went on for ten days. Shi Kefa, who had led the defenders, was captured and executed.⁷

From Yangzhou the Qing troops set out for Nanjing. Learning of this, the Ming emperor fled to Wuhu (and was subsequently captured, and executed in Beijing.). Though there was an ample force in Nanjing (between 200,000 and 300,000), the Chinese feudalists decided to surrender the city. After taking the southern capital, the Qing armies entered Suzhou (Soochow) and Hangzhou (Hangchow) without a fight. Meanwhile, in the province of Jiangxi they captured Jiujiang (Kiukiang) and Nanchang. In Nanjing, the Manchus came down harshly on the population, killing, pillaging and raping, and gutting the imperial palace. From Suzhou and Hangzhou they drove tens of thousands of young women and girls to Beijing, where they sold them into slavery.

Word of the atrocities angered the people of Songjiang, Yixing, Konshan, and other cities. Winning the support of peasant detach-

ments and the fishermen of the Lake Taihu area, the people of Songjiang under Chen Zilong (a member of the patriotic wing of the educated estate) joined by the remnants of the Ming troops tried to liberate Suzhou, but failed. Chen's attempts to recapture Hangzhou were also in vain. Entering Songjiang, the Qing troops vented their wrath on members of the anti-Manchu movement. Chen managed to escape, but was captured in 1647 after another attempt to start an uprising in Songjiang.

The people of Konshan, a little town in the southern part of Jiangsu, resisted the invaders with courage born of despair. They flung back the attacks of Qing troops for four days. When the enemy finally took the town on the fifth day, more than 40,000 Chinese had laid down their lives.

Leaving behind large detachments of the eightbanner army in Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Wusong and other towns on the east coast, the Qing despatched part of their army and the troops of turncoat Ming commanders to other parts of Central and South China. In the early 17th century the provinces in the lower reaches of the Yangzi and in the south-east were economically the most advanced, with many large and small towns whose splendour, and abundance of goods and handicrafts captured the imagination of Chinese and foreign travellers. In these centres the popular war against the Manchu conquerors erupted with new force.

The heroic stand of Li Zicheng's rebel army, which had been the first to engage the invaders, and the staunch resistance of the city of Yangzhou under Shi Kefa inspired the mass of the Chinese people. Functionaries and members of the scholar class abandoned their usual occupations and put themselves at the head of government army units and militia detachments. Merchants donated large sums for arms and food. Tradesmen and artisans took to arms to defend their towns. The bulk of the patriots belonged to the urban commonalty and the peasants, including rebels from the armies of Li Zicheng, Zhang Xianzhong, and other peasant leaders.

In 1645, having captured Nanjing, the Manchus issued an edict ordering all male Chinese in territory under their control to shave their foreheads and braid the hair at the back of their heads within ten days as a token of submission.⁸ Those who refused were beheaded. The Manchus also forbade Chinese officials to wear the ceremonial costume they had worn under the Ming. This went against ancient custom, and insulted national feelings. The pigtail edict, when announced in the city of Jiangyin, Jiangsu province, precipitated popular unrest. The townsmen promptly dispatched the governor sent by the Manchus to gaol, and prepared to defend themselves. They held out for more than a month against the fierce onslaughts of Qing troops, dropping gunpowder-filled "fire pots", pots

of boiling oil, and rocks on the heads of the attackers from the city walls. Not until they had destroyed the fortifications with guns that Jesuit missionaries in the employ of the Qing court had helped to cast, did the Manchus finally break into Jiangyin.⁹ The blood-bath that followed lasted three days and nights. Contemporaries said that more than 172,000 people, including women, old men, and children, were put to death in the city and its environs.¹⁰

The people of Jiading, a little town, resisted the invaders staunchly in 1645. They, too, drove out the Manchu-appointed governor, and held out for two months. More than 20,000 townsmen were butchered when the Qing conquered, but the moment the victors withdrew the insurrection was renewed. To squash the resistance once and for all, the Qing generals loosened carnage in Jiading a second time.

In the south Zhejiang province, Ming troops and militia detachments consisting mainly of townsmen, crossed the Qiantang river and drove back the Manchu bannermen in the vicinity of Hangzhou. But a northern march organised on the initiative of Huang Daozhou, a scholar and patriot, proved unsuccessful. Huang was captured by the Manchus and executed in Nanjing in 1646.

In the central and southern parts of Jiangxi province, the militia co-operating with peasant detachments (New Army of Dragons and Tigers) managed to deal the Qing troops some painful blows, and liberated a fairly large territory, including the city of Jian. But the numerically superior Qing routed the small force of Chinese reinforcements sent from Fujian province, compelling the New Army to withdraw to Ganzhou.

In the middle reaches of the Yangzi and in the north of Hunan province surviving units of the peasant army under Li Guo (Li Zicheng's nephew), He Yaoqi, Liu Tichun, and others, acting in unison with Ming troops, held out for a long time against the Manchu bannermen.

Despite local successes, however, the general military and political situation was going against the patriotic forces. By the autumn of 1646, Qing troops reached the border of Fujian province. When Zheng Zhilong, a Chinese feudal lord, agreed to let them through the mountain passes leading to the interior of Fujian, the city of Fuzhou (Foochow) fell into their hands without a battle. Mistrusting Zheng, who had a strong navy, the Manchus lured him to their camp, put him in irons, and sent him to Beijing, where he was executed in 1662. Developing their offensive (after the capture of Fuzhou and Ganzhou), the Qing entered Guangzhou (Canton), the large trading port in the south of the country, on 22 January 1647.

As a result of their military operations in 1645-1646, the Manchus seized control of a large area covering what are now the provinces of

Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Shenxi, and Gansu. They were also in effective control of the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and, partly, Sichuan. The resistance in these two years was unsuccessful despite the resolute stand of the cities because of serious differences among the leaders of the patriotic movement, and the treachery of some Chinese feudal lords.

After capturing Guangzhou, the Qing mounted a broad offensive against the south-western part of the country in the spring of 1647. They succeeded in taking Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, and came to Guilin, the biggest city in Guangxi province. They laid siege to it three times, but failed to take it. Then, suffering a setback at the approaches to Quanzhou in December 1647, they rolled back. This outcome of the struggle in Guangxi was facilitated in some measure by the guerrilla movement in the neighbouring province of Guangdong.

The victory at Quanzhou stimulated large sections of Chinese society. An uprising broke out in Guangdong in 1648. The anti-Qing movement spread to Jiangxi province, where Chinese troops that had fought on the Manchu side went over to the patriots. Rebellions against the brutal national and feudal oppression of the new rulers began in Shenxi, Shanxi, and Shandong. The biggest was the rising of Caozhou peasants in Shandong. Many rebel detachments, known in official Qing histories as 'bandits of the elm thickets', were active in the area right up to 1655. Peasant units under Yu Qi fought staunchly against the Qing from 1648 to 1662.

The scale of the popular resistance heightened the fighting spirit of the Chinese troops and militia. Detachments of former rebels and of Ming troops under He Tengjiao went on the offensive and cleared a large area of Hunan province, approaching Changsha. A large militia force led by Wang Yi, active in the mountainous region of Simingshan in the south-east of Zhejiang, captured Shangyu in the spring of 1649, but was defeated at the end of 1650. Wang Yi, seized by the rich local gentry, was executed by the Manchus, who displayed his head on the city tower in Ningbo to intimidate the populace.¹¹ The army of 'whiteheads' (its members, peasants and fishermen, wore white bands round their heads) fought on doggedly against the Qing in the Lake Taihu area right up to 1662.

At the price of huge losses, the conquerors finally managed to wipe out the seats of resistance, and to recapture the provinces of Jiangxi, Guangdong, Hunan, and Guangxi. The city of Guangzhou held out for eight months. It was not retaken until the end of 1649. Towards the close of 1650, the Qing also succeeded in capturing Guilin. Its small Chinese garrison, left without support, could not withstand the assault of the numerically superior enemy. The famous

writer, Qu Shisi, who had taken charge of the resisting troops, was taken prisoner and executed.

In late 1646, detachments of the peasant army that had survived after the death of Zhang Xianzhong, set out from the north of Sichuan province in a southerly direction. In early 1647, headed by Zhang's associates Sun Kewang, Li Dingguo, and Ai Nengqi, they crossed Guizhou province, and pushed on to Yunnan, which they reached in 1648. In the main city there, Kunming, they set up their new headquarters. To marshal forces against the common enemy, Sun and Li initiated negotiations with the new Ming government headed by Prince Gui. In early 1652, the rebels and the Ming troops set out in two columns against the Manchus. The eastern column, under Li Dingguo, liberated Guilin, and engaged picked Manchu troops at Hengzhou (now Hengyang) in Hunan province. The 100,000-strong Qing army was lured into a trap, and destroyed. Towards the end of 1652 Li's army inflicted another defeat on the Qing, and again in the same region. The other column of Chinese troops under Liu Wenxiu developed its offensive into Sichuan. Here, peasant troops encircled Chongqing (Chungking) and delivered a crushing blow to the troops of Wu Sangui. Subsequently, however, they were beaten at Langzhong, and had to retreat.

The strife that broke out among the former leaders of the rebel troops following the defeat of Liu Wenxiu enabled the Qing troops to regain the initiative. In 1658, the Manchus captured Guizhou province, and the following year thrust into Yunnan from three directions. Before Kunming fell, Prince Gui and part of his retinue fled to Burma. Wu Sangui, who was in command of the Qing troops, persuaded the Burmese king to send the prince back, and executed this last offspring of the Ming dynasty in Kunming in 1662.

On conquering the southern and south-eastern provinces, the Qing decided to give them over provisionally to the Chinese feudal generals who had defected to their side. Wu Sangui, who had the biggest army, was enfeoffed in Yunnan and part of Guizhou. Shang Kexi, who had captured Guilin, was enfeoffed in Guangdong and part of Guangxi, and Geng Jingzhong in the province of Fujian. The absence of a central patriotic leadership, the frequent quarrels between the rebels and the Ming troops, and the serious disputes between the former peasant leaders (Li Dingguo and Sun Kewang, who later defected to the enemy), enabled the Qing to crush the Chinese forces one by one, and to establish control over the entire Chinese mainland save for a few islands of resistance along the south-eastern coast. Here the Chinese patriots were headed by Zheng Chenggong (son of Zheng Zhilong), known in Western literature as Koxinga.

After the perfidious arrest of his father by the Manchus, the

24-year-old Zheng Chenggong went to the neighbouring province of Guangdong to recruit volunteers in the county of Nanao. In 1647-1648 his troops captured a number of towns along the Fujian coast, including the important commercial centres of Quanzhou and Zhanzhou. The chief base of the anti-Qing struggle was in Xiamen (Amoy). Marshalling a large fleet of junks, Zheng stepped up his operations. In 1659 his navy entered the mouth of the Yangzi, occupied Zhenjiang and approached Nanjing. In the meantime, Chinese troops under Zhang Huangyan entered Wuhu and mounted an offensive in Anhui province. Zheng Chenggong's arrival at the walls of Nanjing created a panic in Beijing. Faint-hearted Qing functionaries thought of transferring the capital from Beijing to Manchuria. But soon Zheng's troops were halted. In the absence of any support, Zhang Huangyan, too, was defeated. But the setback at Nanjing did not dishearten the patriots. In 1660 at Amoy Zheng Chenggong put to rout an enemy navy twice the size of his own.

In 1661, to gain a more dependable base, Zheng Chenggong moved part of his troops to Taiwan, which had been in Dutch hands since 1652. His force of 25,000 dealt a series of defeats on the Dutch, and in February 1662 compelled the Dutch governor to surrender. Then, with the help of his counsellors, Zheng set about organising a new administration on the island. Six high posts (suited to the number of central ministries under the Ming) were established to administer various affairs of state. For fiscal purposes and to heighten its prestige, Zheng's government issued its own copper coin. Military colonies were established to farm free land and ensure supplies for the army and the bureaucratic apparatus. Crafts and industries, especially those relating to the manufacture of arms and to food production (e.g. salt), were encouraged.

Zheng Chenggong's military operations, his raids along the coast of China, kept the Qing in a state of constant tension. In 1661, in fact, they decided to resettle the stock coastal population inland, and to forbid Chinese merchants to have maritime traffic with other countries. But despite the reprisals of the Qing authorities, people in the coastal provinces continued to help the patriots on Taiwan. Thanks to their aid, Zheng Jing (who ruled Taiwan after the death of his father, Zheng Chenggong, in 1662) was able to repulse the joint attack of Qing war junks and a Dutch navy in 1663.

In a bid to end the independence of the three Chinese generals controlling the southern and south-western provinces, the Qing issued an edict in 1673 ordering the dissolution of their troops. Wu Sangui rebelled.¹² In 1674 he was joined by the viceroy of Fujian, and in 1676 by the viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi. Anti-Manchu mutinies flared up among the Chinese troops in the provinces of Sichuan and Shenxi. Making the most of the favourable

situation, Zheng Jing's troops captured Wenzhou, Quanzhou, and Zhanzhou on the south-eastern coast. The Mongols of Chahar, too, rose against the Qing court. But the patriotic movement had no chance of unfolding to massive proportions because of the monarchist designs of the Chinese generals, notably Wu Sangui. He refused to lead his troops north against the Manchus, and was bent on setting up his own government south of the Yangzi.

Though the patriotic movement swept ten provinces, albeit in various strength, the Qing court succeeded in stabilising the situation in the conquered lands by the end of 1676. It concentrated a large force of its eightbanner army in the middle reaches of the Yangzi, and dealt a series of crippling defeats on Wu Sangui. In 1678 in Hengzhou, Wu proclaimed himself emperor, but died soon thereafter. Following his death, the Qing armies entered Yunnan and recaptured Kunming in 1681. Wu's son and heir committed suicide.

The defeat of the patriotic forces during this period was mainly due to their disunity: no prestigious leader appeared in their midst to marshal their strength. Wu Sangui, who had invited the Manchus to China to suppress the peasant rebellion in 1644, and who had thereupon served the conquerors faithfully for a long time, was unpopular. The other salient reason was that the Qing court had by blandishments and concessions won the bulk of the Chinese feudal lords to its side. By its formal renunciation of further seizures of land belonging to the Chinese population, it neutralised the big and small landowners in Central and South China, and they refused to participate in the anti-Manchu movement.

When the patriotic movement on the mainland was brutally crushed and Zheng Jing's troops returned to Taiwan, they found the situation on the island had changed. A clique of feudal lords had gained power there. It colluded with the Qing, permitting a Manchu force to land on the island in 1683. The fall of this last stronghold of national resistance culminated the Manchu conquest of China.

The struggle against the conquerors had lasted nearly 40 years. Owing to the treason of the Chinese feudal lords, the nation failed to repulse the Manchus. But the struggle of the mass of the people against the invaders and the Chinese feudalists who had joined their camp, did not end. It was carried on by various anti-Manchu secret societies. The best known of these were the *Bailianjiao* (the White Lotus society), *Sanhohui* (the Triad society) and *Golaohui* (the Elders society). The White Lotus, which had sprung up as a Buddhist sect, began turning political in the 11th century, and especially under the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1280-1368), when it took the lead in combating foreign oppression. Fearing its popularity, the Qing banned it in 1646. But the secrecy in which it worked helped it to survive. It had many branches and ramifications, chiefly in the

provinces of Central and North China—Hubei, Henan, Shandong, Zhili, and so on.

The Triad Society, according to legend, came into being in 1674, when several Buddhist monks, outraged at the invaders' burning down Shaolinsi Temple in Fujian province, called on the people to resist. Unlike the White Lotus, which consisted mainly of peasants, the Triad embraced traders, peasants, artisans, and petty officials. It was active chiefly in South and East China—the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Jiangxi, and Hunan.

The Elders society, too, was an important anti-Manchu force, first mention of which occurs in official Qing documents in the 1740s. Among its members were dislocated peasants, artisans, and soldiers of provincial armies and the rural militia. At first, the society was active chiefly in the middle reaches of the Yangzi, but branches appeared later in many other parts of the country. The national oppression of Chinese, which was part of Qing policy, frequently caused people of the ruling class, mainly the *shenshi* gentry, to join the secret societies, where, thanks to their education, they promptly advanced to positions of leadership.

In the setting of brutal national oppression and the nothing less than brutal exploitation of the peasantry by Manchu and Chinese overlords, the secret societies were the chief initiators of the people's struggle against foreign oppression.

The Social, Economic and Political System in China in the 17th and 18th Centuries

The Manchu conquest saw many Chinese cities sacked or ravaged, with wholesale slaughter of the native population. The cities of Jinan, Songjiang, Suzhou, Nanchang, Guangzhou, Jingdezhen, and others, which had by the end of the 16th century grown into centres of handicrafts and lively commerce, suffered the most. In some the population had been almost completely exterminated. Only 53 people out of a population of some 200,000 survived the massacre perpetrated by the Manchus in Jiangyin.¹³ Many a rural area was totally depopulated, and became waste land.

The damage done by the Manchu invasion was so great, in fact, that the recovery of the country's productive forces dragged out well into the middle of the 18th century. True, rehabilitation and growth were furthered to some extent by the cultivation of abandoned and virgin lands; the resettlement of landless peasants from densely populated to underpopulated areas; improvements in rural taxation, and repeal of the restrictions on handicrafts and maritime trade introduced during the Manchu conquest.

The Manchus left the old system of feudal exploitation practically intact. Like other conquerors, they appropriated part of the cultivated land. Much of the land fell into the hands of the Manchu emperor, who became the country's biggest landowner. By the mid-18th century he had more than 700 landed estates with a total area of 13,000 *qing*.¹⁴ The princes, the emperor's relatives, and the commanders of the eightbanner troops were also all given possession of huge estates.

The imperial and princely land was, as a rule, worked by client peasants, the *zhuangding*, most of whom had initially been Chinese prisoners of war. They were allotted relatively small plots, and paid rent for them either in kind or cash. In addition to the *zhuangding*, the lands owned by the Manchu nobility were also worked by the *touchongren*, i.e. Chinese who had, with or without land, gone into the service of the Manchus. The appearance of these bondsmen, consisting mainly of landless peasants, resulted from the wholesale Manchu seizures of farmland in North China. An edict issued in 1644, the year of the invasion, said any Chinese wishing to live together with the Manchus could, along with their families, join the banners (or corps) of Manchu troops.¹⁵ In substance, this amounted to bondage, because the peasant who consented to living on land given over to the invaders was registered and attached to a Manchu family as 'retainer' (*huxia*), one of a retinue that also included slaves bought officially or privately.* Peasants, who joined a Manchu feudal lord with their own land, lost title to it, but were allowed hereditary tenure. These peasants had no right before the law. Like the slaves, they could be bought and sold. Flight from imperial and princely estates was a punishable offence.¹⁶

The lands of the Manchu soldiers, the so-called banner people (*qiren*), were a peculiar type of feudal military holding widespread in North China, notably in the environs of Beijing, where half the eightbanner troops were concentrated. The officers were allotted land depending on their position or rank, and soldiers depending on the arm of the service. A company commander, for instance, was given 300 *mu* of arable land, a horseman 150, and a foot soldier 90.¹⁷ These estates, like those of the Manchu nobility, were hereditary and were exempted from taxes. Their sale or lease to Chinese for a term of more than three years was strictly forbidden.

* When buying a slave, house, or plot of land, the purchaser paid a special levy for the registration of the deed of purchase by the *yamen*, where a red seal was affixed to it. A deed with a seal was, therefore, called a 'red deed' (*hong qi*) or 'chopped deed' (*ying qi*), which gave the purchaser formal title to the property. If the purchaser wished to avoid paying the *yamen* (where officials usually exacted a bribe for applying the chop), the parties to the transaction drew up a deed on their own, known as a 'white deed' (*bai qi*), i.e. a deed without a chop.

They were worked by the soldiers and members of their families, and by various retainers, including slave servants of whom nearly every soldier had a few. The bulk of the military estate lived on the peasants' rent, the amount of which was fixed by the government.

Soldiers who fell into debt to the bigger landowners or merchant-usurers, usually lost their holdings. This trend surfaced in the early 18th century, and became widespread in the latter half of the century. In 1729, seeing this as a threat to the well-being of its military establishment, the Qing court redeemed the land with treasury funds. Accordingly, its former owners, the banner people, were expected to repurchase it from the treasury within a certain term. In 1737 the Qing began forming agricultural settlements in Southern Manchuria, where more than 5,000 ruined Manchu families were soon dispatched from Beijing. This was followed in 1753 by an edict transferring land redeemed by the treasury into the charge of local banner administrations, with orders to use the revenues obtained from it in cash or kind to aid ruined soldiers.¹⁸ But nothing could halt the ruin of soldiers and lower-ranking officers. Their holdings gradually became the property of Manchu or Chinese feudalists.

There was yet another type of feudal military land tenure: military colonies in border areas and in the interior. Here the land was worked by the men of the provincial Chinese troops—troops of the green banner (*lüqiyi*). The settlers were usually obliged to relinquish all products of their labour to the state, and were rewarded in kind and, on rare occasions, in cash.

In the early period of Manchu rule large estates were granted to various ministers of religion—Confucianists, Taoists, and Buddhists. The priors of temples and monasteries were issued special governmental patents exempting their possessions from all taxes and duties. But in 1744 the Qing court stopped issuing these patents, evidently because many fugitive peasants embraced monkhood, seeking to escape the brutalities of the tax collector.

Though the conquerors redistributed much of the land to suit their purposes, the larger portion remained in private hands, those of Chinese feudal overlords and peasants. Private holdings, in fact, accounted for about nine-tenths of the cultivated land in the early 19th century. The landowners (known as *min tian*) paid taxes to the state and were also bound to perform corvées. The estates of some landlords extended over areas of several hundred thousand *mu*, and some even over a million *mu*. As a rule, the land was worked by tenants who were, in effect, little better than feudally dependent serfs. The tillers usually owned plots of no more than 8-10 *mu*, sometimes as little as 2-3 *mu*. Where there was still much unoccupied land (as in Sichuan province), the peasant holding might, however, be as large as but never more than 100 *mu*.

Censuses were regularly held to ensure full taxation. Every five years registers were drawn up, listing all males from sixteen to sixty. The process was greatly facilitated by the *baojia* system under which all households in towns, villages and trading settlements were divided into tens and hundreds, with their inhabitants bound by mutual responsibility. Elected persons stood at the head of each ten and each hundred households, which gave them a certain amount of influence in the locality. The predominant position of the landlords in the *baojia* system eased the government's task of collecting taxes and other levies from the peasants and, besides, enabled the authorities to exercise surveillance of their loyalty.

The land tax was the main tax in the realm. Its size differed from province to province, depending on the fertility of the land. A tax of 1 *qian* of silver and 1 *dou* of rice was imposed on average per 1 *mu* of land. In addition to the land tax peasants paid the treasury a per capita cash levy (head tax), which had at first been a tax in its own right and was exacted from all rural folk, including landless peasants. In 1716 the Qing adopted a new system of taxation, whereby the head tax was made part of the land tax. Officially, the head tax amounted to one or two *qian* for each *liang* of silver of the land tax. The new system of taxation did not spread to all parts of the country until the end of the century. The land and head tax (*diding*) amounted to approximately three-quarters of all Qing revenue, and by the end of the 18th and in the early 19th century was collected chiefly in cash (silver).

In addition to the land and head tax, the peasants paid numerous other levies, the size of which was often fixed arbitrarily by local officials. The various duties exacted from peasants who had a strip of land were an additional and heavy burden. When government troops were moved, the peasants were obliged to supply draught animals which they needed for working their fields, and to act as porters.

There was the dominant tendency in agrarian relations for more and more land to be concentrated in the hands of feudal landowners, and for peasants' property to be absorbed by them. In 1704 the Qing court admitted after a study of seven provinces in Central China that no more than three- or four-tenths of the population had land of their own, while the rest were tenants.

To procure a subsistence minimum, peasants engaged in various crafts in addition to farming—spinning, weaving, and the making of domestic utensils and farm implements. The farm produce and other products of their labour were used by peasant families for their own needs, and were also made for sale. In some rural areas in the South-East, and in the valleys of the Yangzi and Huanghe, large numbers of peasants manufactured cotton fabrics for the market. Indeed, the peasants' cottage industries, especially the making of

cotton fabrics, were prominent in the country's overall output of handicrafts, and supplied the foreign market as well as home needs.

With the revival of agriculture and the repeal of restrictions on foreign trade, Nanjing, where there were more than 30,000 looms in the latter half of the 18th century, grew into a major silk manufacturing centre. There were also some 5,000 looms each in Suzhou and Hangzhou, producing the country's highest quality fabrics. The satin made in Nanjing, the brocade of Sichuan, the Huzhou crêpe, the tussore of Shandong, and the delicate Suzhou silks were in great demand at home and abroad. In 1759, the imperial governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, a man named Li Shiyao, reported to the court that each year foreign vessels shipped out silks from Guangzhou worth between 700,000 and 1 million *liang* of silver. Silk manufactured in Jiangsu and Zhejiang was shipped to Japan in exchange for copper used in minting coin. But this item of export was small, amounting to slightly more than 30 tonnes a year.¹⁹ Shanghai, Suzhou, Songjiang, and a few other coastal cities were the major centres of the cotton industry.

With the textile industry making good strides, dyeing began to develop at a rapid pace. There were more than 400 dye works in Suzhou by the 1730s, each employing several dozen wage labourers.²⁰ The industry was highly specialised.

Jingdezhen was the country's main porcelain centre. It had imperial and private manufactories of porcelain. Tang Yin, who managed a court-owned porcelain works in the city for over ten years (from 1724), described it thus: 'Jingdezhen, which is located at some distance from Fuliang, has a circumference of more than 10 *li*.... The place is renowned for its porcelain, and merchants come here from all sides. It has approximately 200 or 300 private pottery works belching fire and smoke the year round. There are several hundred thousand labourers and craftsmen in the city, and it is hard to find a person not engaged in the making of porcelain.'²¹ Jingdezhen porcelain was popular at home and abroad, especially in Europe.

Mining (of copper, iron, and other ores) was practised chiefly in the south-western provinces, notably Yunnan. In the 1720s there were some 20 copper mines, and more than 40 in the 1770s.²² The imperial and private mines in Yunnan province employed more than 700,000 labourers in the 1760s and 1770s, not counting the large number of miners working copper without an official permit.²³ The advances in mining spurred the output of metals and the improvement of ore-processing techniques. The most advanced metal-working centre was Foshanzhen, near Guangzhou, where they made iron cauldrons, sheet iron, wire, nails, needles, and other objects of domestic and industrial use.

The refining of salt and sugar and the manufacture of paper

increased considerably in the latter half of the 18th century. Salt production was practised widely in Sichuan, where salt was obtained by evaporation of brine from wells and springs. There were some 2,400 such wells in Shehong county in the heart of the Sichuan hollow in 1730. The salterns were, as a rule, private enterprises.

Despite the emergence of manufactories, peasant cottage industry and urban handicrafts were still dominant. Artisans and traders constituted the bulk of the urban population. They were organised in various guilds, usually known as *hang*. In Chongqing, for example, there were weavers', scutchers', and other *hang*.

There were as many as 550 various guilds in Suzhou in the 17th and 18th centuries, which is evidence of the great variety of urban handicrafts practised in the area. Workshop owners belonging to the guilds were also usually the salesmen of their wares. The guilds had their own rules of trading and fixed the prices at which their members could sell their produce. Those who broke the rules were fined or otherwise punished.

As distinct from local traders, merchants from other provinces, prefectures or counties formed fellow-native leagues (*huiguan*), of which there were more than 250 in Beijing alone in the 1840s. The big merchants in specialised fields (silk merchants, for example) often had their special unions, the *gongsuo*. The emergence of this type of organisation was evidence not merely of increasing specialisation in commerce, but also of a certain stratification among traders and artisans.

The predominance of the guilds with their petty regulations and their system of mandatory apprenticeship (of three or more years) hindered the growth of private manufactories, thus constraining the emergence of new relations in town and country.

The imperial manufactories were active in the manufacture of arms and gunpowder, in mining, in the salt industry and the making of silk and porcelain, in shipbuilding, and printing. There were large-scale silk manufactories in Nanjing, Suzhou, and Hangzhou. In 1745 each of them had 600 and more looms, producing expensive fabrics for the imperial court. The large imperial porcelain manufactory in Jingdezhen had up to 60 glazing kilns at the turn of the 18th century. Nearly each province had its own mint, making copper coins. The fact that at the Zhejiang provincial mint in Hangzhou each of the furnaces was handled by some 20 workers of different skills, from copper smelter to polisher, is evidence of a relatively extensive division of labour.²⁴

The imperial workshops and manufactories were mainly manned by artisans obliged by law to perform labour duties. Skilled workers and foremen were paid a monthly wage and a ration in kind three or four times a year. Aside from these artisans, the forced labour of

convicts was widely used, especially in mining.

Wage labour became widespread in imperial handicrafts and manufactories in the latter half of the 18th century. In the mid-18th century, out of the 28 skilled workers required to finish silk fabrics and make garments for members of the imperial court, the court administration summoned only twelve from the imperial weaveries in Nanjing, Suzhou, and Hangzhou, while the rest were hired from among local craftsmen.

Besides the 18th-century imperial manufactories, there were also private ones. When the edict that no owner of a weavery could have more than 100 looms adopted by Shunzhi (1644-1661) was lifted in the early 18th century, manufactories appeared with several hundred looms. They were usually started by prosperous foremen or merchants with considerable capital. The Qing, however, held down the growth of private enterprise owing, in part, to the old Chinese concept of the primacy of farming and the secondary place of handicrafts and commerce. This notion is set out in an imperial edict of 1727:

'Out of the occupations of the four groups of the population, the most important after the scholars is farming, inasmuch as scholars, artisans, and traders all subsist on the farmers' labour. This is why farming is the basic occupation in the Under-Heaven (China and the rest of the Universe), while handicrafts and trade are subsidiary.'²⁵

The feudal oppression was especially brutal in mining. Fearing popular unrest, the Qing hindered the opening of new mines, while exacting huge taxes from the existing ones. Out of the ore obtained, the treasury usually took 20 per cent in taxes, bought 40 per cent at low state prices, and left the owners a mere 40 per cent. There were also cases when the treasury took just 10 per cent of the output in taxes, while buying the remaining 90 per cent at state prices.

With the gradual recovery of farming and urban industry towards the end of the 17th century, economic ties were renewed between different parts of the country, contributing to the emergence of stable regional markets. With the ongoing specialisation, markets, too, became specialised. A lively trade in yarn, and in silk fabrics and articles went on in cities of the silk-producing area—Nanjing, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Huzhou, and a few others. The biggest cotton textiles markets were in Songjiang and Shanghai. The city of Wuhu was known as a dye-making centre, and had a big dye market. Much of the trading in paper was done in Wuchang.

The growth of domestic and foreign commerce stimulated the growth of cities. In the 18th century, the Qing Empire had some 380 large and small towns. The biggest, according to the Chinese 18th-century author, Li Jizhuang, were Beijing in the north, Foshan-zhen in the south, Suzhou in the east, and Hankou in the west.

Widely known in the Orient were Wuhu, Yangzhou, Jiangning, and Hangzhou, which rivalled Suzhou in trade and handicrafts. Beijing was not only the major administrative centre, but also a place of lively commerce. More than 10,000 junks carrying imperial grain arrived there from the south annually along the Grand Canal. The same junks also carried merchants' wares.

According to official data, the population of the 18 provinces of China proper was 264 million in 1775, and 300 million in 1790.

With the increasing output of marketable produce, especially in the south-eastern part of the country and in the valleys of the Yangzi and Huanghe, middlemen began to come to the fore, gradually gaining control of trade in key farm products and handicrafts.

The abusive practices of the local authorities were a grave obstacle to the growth of commerce. Officials exacted all sorts of taxes and imposts, and customs officers exacted duties and additional impositions. The restrictive trading regulations of the guilds, compounded with the state system of salt and tea concessions, were another serious impediment. The salt was obtained usually by peasant serfs (*zaohu*). The salt collected from them by the treasury in taxes was stored in special warehouses, whence it was released when needed to officials (or merchants) for sale to the public. But the bulk of the salt was bought from the peasants at low prices by concessionaires with special government licences valid in specified areas. Some merchants obtained patents allowing them to sell salt in any part of the country. Winning local officials to their side by bribery, these concessionaires had the consumer at their mercy, for they were in virtually monopolistic control of this necessary commodity. Raising the price of salt at will, they amassed tremendous fortunes.

In the interest of the treasury, the Qing often awarded various other privileges, letting merchants have a near monopoly on key foodstuffs and handicrafts. The powerful Shanxi merchants, who controlled the trading in salt, tea, wheat, silk, and some other goods, were also often money-lenders. They owned the numerous money-changing and money-lending shops, and a network of pawnshops extending to many other provinces. Some also engaged in banking operations: taking and issuing money deposits, issuing securities, and the like. Pawnshops spread far and wide in the 17th and 18th centuries. There were some 600 to 700 in Beijing and its environs. Many of them belonged to officials. By law the monthly interest they charged was not to exceed three per cent, though it was invariably much higher. The plight of the townsmen in this setting may be illustrated by the fact that at the end of the year, when the time came to settle accounts, many townsmen had to pawn their wives and children.

In structure, 17th- and 18th-century China was an absolute

monarchy. The emperor was thought to be the Son of Heaven ruling the Universe by Heaven's will. His person was considered sacred. The windows and doors facing the roads along which he passed on his way to his country palace were tightly closed so that no inhabitant of the capital should set eyes on him. It was strictly forbidden to pronounce or write the emperor's name. People knew their ruler by a symbol, the reign title that he chose when ascending the throne.

The highest legislative powers were vested in the Imperial Secretariat (*Neige*) and the Military Council (*Junjichu*). Originally, it was the Secretariat, formed in 1671 of an equal number of Manchu and Chinese dignitaries, that dealt with the important military and civil affairs. Then, after 1732, when the Military Council was officially constituted to direct the war against the Dzungars (it had functioned since 1727 as a secret group of the emperor's advisers), all important affairs of state passed into its hands.²⁶ Unlike the Secretariat, whose number of members and deputies was established by law, the size of the Military Council depended on the emperor's wishes. As a rule, it consisted of Manchus, with only a few Mongols and Chinese serving on it who had demonstrated their loyalty to the Qing court. Members of the Military Council drew up edicts and regulations, were concerned with the affairs of the military establishment and passed judgement in especially important political crimes. While leaning heavily on the Military Council for advice, the emperor exercised his supreme legislative and executive powers through a body of high officials, appointed to deal with military, judicial, financial, and other affairs.

The central administration of the Qing was essentially modelled on that of the Ming. Supreme executive powers were vested in six central ministries, those of appointments, taxes, rites, military affairs, criminal affairs, and public works. There were other agencies: one controlling officials in the capital and at provincial and county level, known as the Censorate (*Duchayuan*), and the Supreme Court (*Dalisi*) which was, in effect, a court of appeals. Foreign relations with countries east and south of China were dealt with by the ministry of rites, while those with countries to north and west by the office of dependent territories (*Lifanyuan*) instituted in 1638, before the capture of Beijing, in place of the former Mongolian Administration.

China proper was divided into 18 provinces, each headed by a governor (*xunfu*) or imperial viceroy (*zongdu*), the latter usually governing two provinces at once. Though the Qing court sought to control the local administrations, they had a certain amount of independence because of distance and absence of good roads and communications.

By tradition, the bureaucracy was recruited from among holders

of scholarly degrees obtained in civil examinations. The scholastic system of education, the memorising of canonical Confucian texts, and the rigidly archaic 'eight-legged' structure of the essays they had to write doomed most of the examination candidates to certain failure. But for a large bribe the hardest of examinations was passed with ease, opening the doors to a coveted position in the administration. Hence, the feudal landlord background of the privileged scholar gentry. Holders of academic degrees were known as *shenshi* (men with the belt, the distinguishing mark of the scholar). They paid no head tax and were immune to corporal punishment. The influence they wielded as bearers of the official feudal ideology—Confucian ethics and morality—was so great that from time to time the imperial court imposed restrictions. They were forbidden to make peasants paying taxes to the treasury their dependents. They could not hold office involving the collection of taxes in rural administrations or act as official assessors of goods, which was a sure source of profit, and so on. By fixing a quota for examination candidates from each province, the Qing excited conflict and rivalry between *shenshi* and the provincial officials. Still, despite the restrictions of the central government, the influence of *shenshi* on the country's political and spiritual life was tremendous.

The military establishment was an important pillar of the royal house. It consisted of the eightbanner Manchu troops and the Chinese greenbanner troops. The eight banners consisted of Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese who had gone into Manchu service before the 1644 invasion of China (they were known as *hanjun*), but their backbone was the Manchus. Before the 18th century, the Manchu army garrisoned 72 strategic points of the empire and was a powerful force, but with the passage of time its combative spirit was eroded and it degenerated into a parasitical caste.

The greenbanner troops were recruited from among Chinese in provinces. They were subordinate to the provincial high command, and were nearly thrice as numerous as the eightbanner army. The high command included Manchus, but Chinese commanders who had shown loyalty to the Qing were more numerous. The Chinese soldiers' wage in cash and kind was approximately one-third of that paid to Manchu soldiers.

On taking charge in China in 1644, the Qing set up a special committee to adapt the Ming code, *Da Ming lü*, to the political changes in North China. The amendments were completed in 1646, and the revised code was made public in Chinese the following year.²⁷ Most Ming dynasty edicts survived the revision, and served as the country's fundamental law (*lü*). This was not subject to change, and was the foundation on which all legislation of the following two and a half centuries reposed. Any new laws adopted by the Qing were worked

into the code as supplementary edicts (*li*). By a ruling of 1746 they were subject to periodical revision, and subsequently such revision took place every five or ten years. The Qing code, known as the *Da Qing lü li* (the fundamental laws and regulations of the great Qing dynasty), was essentially a criminal code that placed the Manchu conquerors in a position of privilege in relation to the indigenous population. "Free" Chinese (*minren*) were punished more severely than Manchus, Mongols and *hanjun* Chinese, who were soldiers, for the same crimes. Besides, men belonging to the eightbanner troops enjoyed the right of having their punishment replaced with a less demeaning chastening. Local Chinese courts had no jurisdiction over members of the Manchu nobility or the military establishment, while Manchu officials presiding in these courts could examine cases involving Chinese. This position of privilege bred all sorts of abuses and led to the corruption of the Manchu bureaucracy.

The 'free' Chinese were by tradition divided into four estates, those of scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants, which were recognised as equal before the law and belonging to the 'nobility'. The vast majority were farmers—great landlords or minor peasant proprietors. Among the 'lowly' (or 'mean') were actors, servants or clerks of government offices, domestic slaves, and prostitutes. Unlike the 'nobility', they and their children were not admitted to examinations and could not, therefore, become officials. This not very numerous social group also included some categories of feudally dependent peasants and labourers working under written contract. The punishment meted out to the 'noble' and the 'mean' for the same crime differed in nature, being less severe for the former. Besides, the law allowed civil servants to pay a ransom to escape the corporal punishments provided for in cases of dereliction of duty and other offences.

Backed by its army and the ramified bureaucratic machinery, the Qing court practised ruthless national oppression of the Chinese. The supreme state power was concentrated in the hands of Manchus. Manchus enjoyed privileges no Chinese enjoyed. From 1732 to 1796 Manchus comprised 56 per cent and Chinese only 37 per cent of the Military Council, with the remaining 7 per cent being Mongols.

In the six ministries, too, where the top positions were formally held on an equal footing by Manchus and Chinese, the actual power belonged to Manchus. Until the early 19th century, governors and viceroys of the economically and strategically most important provinces were also appointed from among Manchus. To maintain control over the central administration, the Qing court devised a special system of promotions, dividing all offices into four echelons depending on their importance—for Manchus, Mongols, *hanjuns*, and Chinese. The highest and most remunerative positions in the central

administration and locally were awarded to Manchus, and Manchus had the deciding vote in all matters of state.

The Manchus persecuted any Chinese scholars or literati who expressed disaffection. Books that directly or indirectly attacked the Qing were banned and burned. The extreme reactionary ideas of Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) neo-Confucian philosophy of the Sung era were propagated. In 1663 more than seventy people were executed for printing and disseminating an unofficial history of the Ming dynasty, and in 1711 more than a hundred were put to death for being involved in the case of scholar Dai Mingshi, who had inserted in one of his works a description of the anti-Qing struggles in the South-West written by a friend. In 1729, the works of Lü Liuliang (1629-1683), who was a student of literature and conversant in medicine, were banned because he had turned down a post offered him by the Qing and retired to a monastery, where he stayed until his death. When the authorities learned that some of his works contained anti-Manchu remarks, his remains were exhumed and cut to pieces, while his disciples and relatives were put to death. In later years, the persecution of literati and publishers, and of those who kept or read banned books, was still more relentless. By minimised official data there were 24 confiscations of banned books between 1774 and 1782, with more than 13,800 different books being burned. When preparing old books for republication, Qing officials weeded out everything they thought may injure their regime. Wholesale repression and rigorous censorship were applied to inculcate the idea of eternal submission and slavish obedience. And in so doing, the Manchu rulers hypocritically declared that Manchus and Chinese were 'of one family'.

Wars Waged by the Qing Empire

The foreign policy of the Qing in the 17th and 18th centuries was distinctly aggressive in complexion, especially after the subjugation of Taiwan. Territorial seizures were designed to distract the Chinese from any attempts at liberating themselves by main force.

Mongolia, which had broken up into three parts in the mid-16th century—the southern, northern, and western—became one of the first targets of the Qing military expansionism. The place of leadership among the tribes of Southern Mongolia (in what is now Inner Mongolia) was seized by the Chahars, but they had already been subdued by the Manchus in 1636. In Northern Mongolia (Khalkha) three rulers stood to the fore at the turn of the 17th century: Tushetu Khan, Zasaktu Khan, and Tsetseng Khan, who kept down all the other princes. In 1646, Qing troops invaded Northern Mongolia on the

pretext of pursuing the Sunites, who had earlier come under the authority of the Manchu emperor and then escaped to Khalkha to join Tsetseng Khan. The orders from Beijing were that the Manchu commander, Prince Duoduo, was to capture the chief of the Sunites, Tingjisi, and if possible Tsetseng Khan as well. In Northern Mongolia the Qing troops encountered stronger resistance than they had expected. They put off their aggressive plan. The 1646 campaign persuaded the Qing that the Khalkhas would be difficult to conquer. In the meantime, hostilities in Central and South China, where the main force of the conquering armies was engaged, required a safe rear, and doubly so because the Qing possessions were bordered in the north by only recently conquered Southern Mongolia. Qing diplomacy set to work to pressure the Khalkha khans, seeking to wrest from them assurances of loyalty to the Manchu emperor. In 1650, the Qing demanded of Zasaktu, Tushetu and the other Khalkha rulers that they should swear friendship and alliance. Since the Khalkha feudal lords had for a number of years refused to comply, the Manchu court sent them an ultimatum: either swear allegiance or send no more envoys to Beijing. Fearing they would no longer be allowed to send their caravans of goods to China (these usually accompanied Mongol envoys) the four rulers of eastern Khalkha laid down the required oath in January 1656.

While inconspicuously buttressing their positions in Khalkha, where they encouraged internecine conflict among Mongols, the Qing kept close tabs on developments in Western Mongolia. Early in the 17th century, a powerful Dzungar Khanate had risen there following the alliance of the four main groups of Oirat tribes (Choro, Hoshot, Torgout and Derbet), headed by a member of the Choro house—Batur Huntaiji. On the latter's initiative an all-Mongol convention was called of sovereign princes, which adopted a code of laws (*Tsa-adjin bichig*) that was designed to end the internal strife and rally forces against the common enemy, the Manchus—a move of special importance in view of the Manchus' seizure of the South-Mongolian principalities.

After Batur's death, his son Galdan (1671-1697) succeeded to the Dzungar throne. He followed in his father's footsteps and sought commercial ties with all his neighbours, including China. In 1678 Galdan captured Kashgaria, compelling the local Uighur population to pay a yearly tribute. With the accession of Eastern Turkestan, where a supporter of Galdan's was made khan, the position of the Dzungar Khanate became visibly stronger. Its swift raids into neighbouring lands added to its influence in Tibet and especially in Khalkha.

By 1684, the internecine strife in Khalkha intensified. Eager to exploit this, the Qing despatched envoys there under the guise of

mediators. Galdan, too, sent an emissary, but the latter was killed by Tushetu Khan. In the summer of 1688, Galdan with 30,000 horsemen rode into Northern Mongolia and wiped out the armies of the Khalkha rulers one by one. Fleeing with their retinue to Southern Mongolia, the Khalkha khans appealed to the Qing court for aid. Towards the end of the year Galdan sent envoys to China, offering to resume trade, which had been broken off by the Qing. He also asked for Tushetu Khan, whom he wanted to bring to justice as one of the chief culprits of the armed conflict. But the Manchus turned down his offer and dispatched a large army against him. Defeated by it, in 1690, Galdan retreated to Kobdo.

The following year, an assembly of princes of Southern and Northern Mongolia at Dollon-nor, where Emperor Xuan Ye (reign title Kangxi) arrived at the head of a large Qing army, announced the incorporation of the Khalkha principalities in the Qing Empire. The Mongol khans were allowed to retain their titles, but the Qing abolished the old Mongol denominations. In their place, the feudal Mongol nobility was given Manchu-Chinese princely titles—*qin-wang*, *jun-wang*, *beile*, *beizi*, and *gong*. Under an edict of 1691, depending on eminence, each prince was entitled to a certain number of dependent *arat* families, who were outright serfs (*khamdjilga*); in addition, by an edict of 1733, they received a stipend from the Qing government. Khalkha was divided into *khoshuns* (banners), as was Southern Mongolia before it.

Having secured the possession of Khalkha, the Qing turned their attention to Dzungar Khan Galdan. The armed clashes between the Oirat and Qing troops ended in Galdan's defeat at Ulan-Butun in early September 1690. A long lull in hostilities, until 1695, followed. During this period the Qing were gathering forces against Galdan, and in the meantime offered him to accept the emperor's suzerainty. In the summer of 1696 Emperor Xuan Ye entered Khalkha at the head of a large army. In June, a decisive battle was fought at Tchamdo, in which Galdan was defeated. The following year Galdan was totally crushed, and the number of *khoshuns* in Khalkha was increased from 30 to 55, which added to its fragmentation. By 1725, it had as many as 74 *khoshuns*, and subsequently their number rose to 82.

Then, having established control over the Mongol princes, encouraging Lamaism, the Qing brutally exploited the *arat* herdsmen, levying unbearable taxes and corvées. How great the requisitions were may be seen from the one fact that in 1753 the Khalkha princes supplied Qing troops 5,700 horses and 1,600 camels.

In 1762, to secure closer political and military control over the Mongols, who were displaying a leaning towards independence or eagerness to accept Russian protection, the Qing court instituted

the office of governor (*amban*) with his seat in Urga. This Manchu functionary was charged with supervising political and commercial affairs in the region. In addition to the Manchu *amban* appointed by the central administration, there was also a Mongol co-*amban*. Nominally, the Mongol was there to counsel the Manchu, but in effect he only executed the latter's orders.

After Galdan's crushing defeat and death in 1679, there was temporary calm along the western and northern frontiers of the Qing Empire. But in 1729, Manchu commanders began massing forces at Yili with the intention of conquering the Dzungar Khanate, ruled then by Tsewan Rabdan, in a two-pronged flanking assault. But one of the Qing columns was halted at Kobdo, and the plan fell through. The Oirat counter-offensive, too, in the direction of Khalkha failed to yield the desired advantage. In 1734, Galdan Tseren (son of Tsewan Rabdan) sued for peace. Their resources badly strained, the Qing consented. But they did not at once accept the offered terms. The negotiations dragged out to 1737, when a demarcation agreement was finally reached.

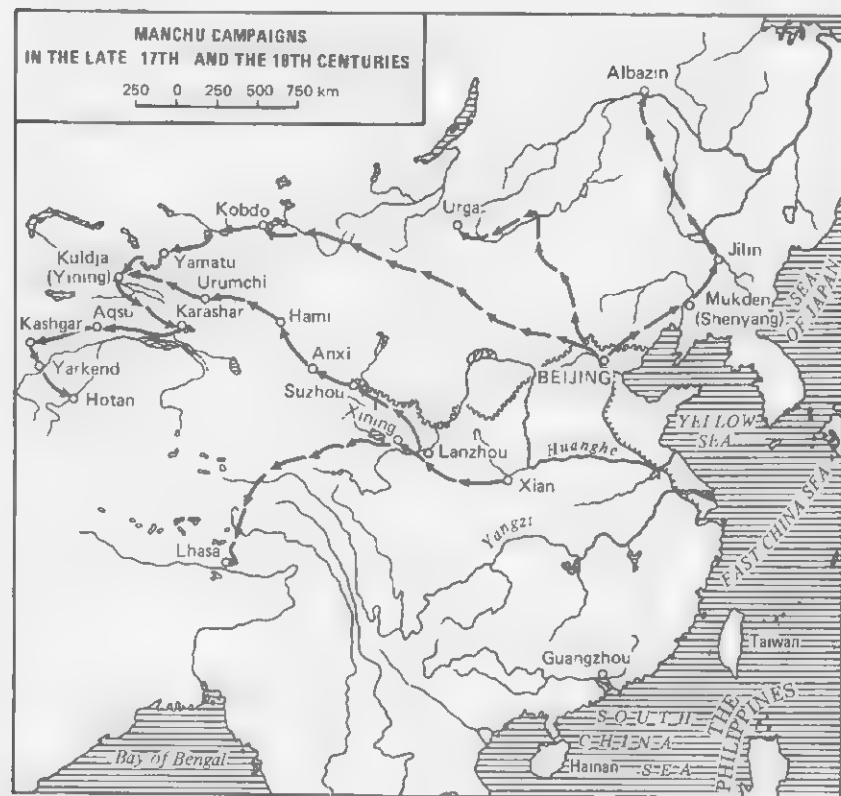
After Tseren's death in 1745, internal conflicts erupted in Dzungaria, with Prince Dawatsi emerging the victor. In 1752, backed by Amursana, chief of the Khoitas, he established himself on the throne of the Khanate. Then, to get rid of a possible rival, Dawatsi mounted a campaign against his former ally. In 1754, his army of 30,000 crushed Amursana's forces, and the latter, fleeing to China, asked the emperor for aid. The Qing had long been waiting for an excuse to thrust into Yili, and wasted no time sending a large military force. Under the blows of the Qing army the once powerful Dzungar Khanate again broke up into principalities.

In a bid to shake off Manchu guardianship, Amursana started a rebellion in 1755. The rebels succeeded in wiping out the force left by the Manchus in Yili. But the numerical superiority of the Qing troops that arrived in early 1756, coupled with the treachery of local feudal lords, prevented Amursana from consolidating his initial success. In March 1756, he was compelled to flee to the Kazakh steppes. Then, securing the support of the Kirghiz and Kazakhs, he returned to Dzungaria and again led the patriotic struggle of his people against the Manchu-Chinese feudalists. But the strength of the contending sides was unequal. The Qing were superior in numbers and were also better armed (they had flintlock muskets and light field-guns). In March 1757 Qing troops under Zhao Hui routed the rebels at Urumchi and, pursuing them, reached the borders of the Kazakh pastureland. Amursana and his family escaped to Russia, where he soon succumbed to smallpox in Tobolsk.

The final seizure of Dzungaria by the Manchus culminated in a bloodbath, in which nearly the entire Oirat population was massa-

cred. According to mid-19th century Chinese historian Wei Yuan, the punitive expeditions wiped out three-tenths of the population, with another four-tenths dying from epidemics, while two-tenths escaped to Russia.²⁸

After capturing Dzungaria, the Manchus began priming for the conquest of Eastern Turkestan, where a Moslem mullah, Burkhan ad-Din of Kokand, was made khan with their backing in 1755. In 1757, a Manchu functionary was sent from Yili to Kashgar to negotiate tributes. But the talks collapsed. On the advice of his brother Huodjizhan (who had escaped from Yili, where he had been held hostage), Burkhan ad-Din proclaimed the independence of Eastern Turkestan, and began preparing for war. The first contingent of eightbanner troops arriving in Kutcha was routed by him in the summer of 1757. So the Qing did not again venture to engage a large force against



Map 2

Eastern Turkestan until they had crushed Dzungaria. In August 1758, after a two-months siege, the Manchus entered Kutcha. More than a thousand rebels and townsmen were summarily executed. In November 1758, the Qing army approached the city of Yarkend. The siege lasted more than three months and ended in a grave Manchu setback. But reinforcements and betrayal by a number of Uighur lords, enabled the incursors to turn disaster into victory.

In July 1759, they mounted a new offensive. Moving in two columns, they captured Kashgar and Yarkend (Map 2). By the end of the year, they were in control of all Kashgaria. Owing to the conciliatory posture of the feudalists governing the cities, who did not want the khan to augment his power, the theocratic Uighur state in Eastern Turkestan ceased to exist. Its downfall was hastened by a conflict between the leaders of two Moslem sects—the white-mountain and the black-mountain *khodjas*, who had often before tried to enlist outside help in the struggle for power. Seizing supreme civil and military authority in Kashgaria, the Qing court placed men from the tribal gentry at the head of the local administration. These chiefs became obedient tools in the emperor's hands.

The lands of Eastern Turkestan and Dzungaria were incorporated in the Qing Empire as Xinliang (New Frontier or New Territory). An area of military colonisation, the region soon became a place of exile for those who ever endeavoured to rebel against the feudal despotism of the Qing dynasty.

In 1720, having helped to drive out the Oirots from Tibet, the Qing seized the opportunity to fortify their own political influence there. They appointed a new Dalai Lama, the temporal and spiritual head of the country. The administration of Eastern Tibet was entrusted to a pro-Manchu nobleman Kangjinai, and that of Western Tibet to the hereditary prince Poluonai. But in 1723, when the Qing court withdrew its troops, the Tibetan nobility instantly set upon the pro-Manchu elements. A plot supported by the populace brought about the assassination of Kangjinai in 1727. The Manchu government assumed that the action had been inspired by the Oirots, and dispatched a force of 15,000 to suppress the unrest. But the rebels were crushed before its arrival by local troops under Poluonai. When the Qing army arrived in Lhasa in June 1728, Poluonai was declared ruler of all Tibet. To keep an eye on the local nobility and the population, two Manchu residents were left behind in Lhasa with a garrison of 1,000.

In 1747, after Poluonai's death, his son, who succeeded him, wished nothing more fervently than to get rid of the Manchu overseers, and contacted the Oirots in the hope of obtaining military assistance. Meanwhile, the Manchu residents grew suspicious of the new ruler, who was gathering troops on the pretext of fighting the

Oirots. In November 1750 they lured him to a temple, and there killed him. The people of the capital were angered. A huge crowd, its ears deaf to the placating appeals of the Dalai Lama, broke into the Manchu commandery and killed the residents. Learning of the disturbances in Tibet, the Qing sent troops there again. The Manchu commanders, who came to Lhasa in early 1751, had the administration of Tibet put into the hands of four *kalons* (ministers) obedient to the Dalai Lama. In important matters, the *kalons* were pledged to seek the advice of the Manchu residents, whose powers had been considerably enlarged. To make the residents' advice more 'persuasive', the Manchu garrison in Lhasa was increased to 1,500 men.

While working to subordinate Tibet, the Qing also acted to brace their positions in the south-western regions, inhabited by the Miao, Yao, Tung, and other peoples. Until the beginning of the 18th century, the Miao tribes in the mountain areas at the conjunction of Hunan, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces had their own administrations (*tusi*) headed by hereditary chiefs, who collected tribute from their people and delivered it to the Chinese rulers. The *tusi* system, instituted under the Mongol dynasty of Yuan, gave the Miao tribes a certain amount of independence, notably in matters of life style and self-defence against hostile attacks. To subdue the Miao, the Qing set out to abolish *tusi*, at least in part, in Hunan and Guangxi provinces. The Miao districts in these provinces were overrun by the Manchus, who made the local people wear pigtails and pay taxes.

In 1726, Oertai, the viceroy of Yunnan and Guizhou, sent a memorial to the throne, suggesting to abolish the *tusi* in Guizhou province and to replace it with a Qing administration. Between 1726 and 1731 the south-western Miao-populated parts of the country were forcibly incorporated into the provinces governed by Manchu-Chinese administrations.

In 1747 the Qing introduced troops into the Dajinchuan region in the upper reaches of the Daduhe in western Sichuan, where the local Turbot tribes resisted fiercely. Not until 1748 did the Qing manage to subdue them.

Having seized vast areas in the west and consolidated authority there, the Qing turned on their southern neighbours.

By the mid-1760s, a grave armed conflict erupted along the Burma-Chinese border.²⁹ In 1765, the King of Burma sent a general to collect tribute from the Shan tribes in the upper reaches of the Salween. Learning of this, the nephew of the ruler of the large Shan principality of Kengtung hastened to Yunnan province and asked for Chinese aid. Spurred by Chinese merchants' complaints of unjust treatment by the Burmese, the Qing border authorities sent an armed troop into Burma, but it was effectively halted. A second attempt to

thrust into Burma was also unsuccessful.

In the beginning of 1768, an army of 40,000 invaded Burma in a two-pronged drive. In February 1769, the main force reached Singaung, 48 km from the Burmese capital of Ava. Cutting and harassing the invaders' lines of communication and denying them food, the Burmese compelled them to turn back with heavy losses. In fear of the wrath his defeat would evoke at home, the Qing commander Mingrui hanged himself.

Once again, in early 1769, something like 60,000 Qing troops endeavoured to capture the Burmese capital in a move from Bhamo, and again were driven back. Then, in the beginning of 1770, a treaty was signed in Kaungton, obliging the Qing to withdraw from Burmese territory, and to melt down their field pieces before crossing the border.

Flying into a rage, Emperor Hong Li (reign title Qianlong) banned all trade with Burma. But the losses this caused were so great that Qing functionaries soon began looking for ways of settling the conflict. A Chinese embassy was sent to Burma in 1787. Eager to maintain his traditional trade with China, the new Burmese king, Bodawpaya, reciprocated by dispatching his own envoys to the Qing in 1788. Another Burmese embassy went to Beijing in 1792. Among other gifts to the emperor, it brought a depiction of his honorary reign title in Pali. The emperor fancied that the long script was an expression of loyalty and submission, and gave the Burmese envoys a patent of investiture in the shape of a seal with a handle of pure gold modelled in the form of a camel.³⁰

At the end of the 1780s, the Qing mounted an attack on the North Vietnamese kingdom of Annam. The expedition was launched when nearly the entire territory of present-day Vietnam had fallen under the control of rebel peasants. Formally, the troops were despatched in response to a request of the Annam King Li Theu Tkhong, who had fled to China. In November 1788, a large Manchu force under Sun Shiyi, viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, entered the Annam capital of Thang-long (present-day Hanoi). Claiming that Annam had been a vassal of China since times immemorial, Sun Shiyi granted King Li Theu Tkhong a patent of investiture on behalf of the Dragon Throne. Fearing popular retaliation, the invaders set up fortifications round the capital, but to no avail. The power of the puppet king, which reposed on foreign guns, was quickly broken. In January 1789, the rebels mounted a surprise attack near the capital, and defeated the Qing troops. Feeling that a long war against the Manchus would strain their resources, the leader of the rebels and the head of their state, Nguen Hiue (Kuang Chong), sent the Dragon Throne an offer to establish neighbourly relations, which was favourably received.

After Kuang Chong's death in 1792, the rebel peasants' state gradually ran to seed. In July 1802, a long-time enemy of the rebels, Nguen An, declared himself king, adopting the name Zia Long, and soon captured Thang-long. The new ruler sent envoys to Beijing to win China's support, and received the desired patent of investiture in 1803. The Qing also 'permitted' him to name his state Vietnam.³¹ Though the succeeding rulers, too, continued (up to 1885) to accept the investiture of the Qing court, Vietnam maintained its independence in both internal and external affairs.

A sharp armed conflict occurred between China and Nepal over Tibet, which was then essentially under Qing control, in the early 1790s. In the 1760s the petty principalities of Nepal had been conquered by the warlike Gurkha tribes coming from India. In 1788 they invaded Tibet on the pretext that the Tibetans were making Nepalese merchants pay higher duties and, furthermore, were creating impediments to the salt trade.³² But among the chief reasons for the war was the Tibetans' refusal to circulate a new silver coin (with a considerable admixture of copper) minted by the Nepalese at a rate of exchange fixed by the latter. The negotiations with the invading Gurkhas ended in the Tibetans' agreeing to pay an annual tribute in cash.

In 1791, the Gurkhas again crossed into Tibet on the pretext that the promised tribute had not arrived. They captured a number of towns in Western Tibet (Shigajie, and others), and sacked the wealthy lamasery at Tashilhongpo. On receiving word of the new Nepalese invasion, the Qing government sent a large force under Fukanan to Tibet. Moving back to the border and digging in along the mountain passes, the Gurkhas stood their ground. In August 1792, they succeeded in defeating the Qing troops as they tried to cross the Tadi by a suspension bridge. All the same, dreading the presence of enemy troops so near the capital, the Nepalese court was anxious to negotiate, and the Qing command jumped at the offer. The following month, a treaty was signed under which Nepal undertook to send envoys with gifts to Beijing every five years in recognition of Qing suzerainty.

The war with Nepal culminated in the final subjugation of Tibet by the Manchus. Under the new regulations drawn up by imperial functionaries, the Manchu residents in Lhasa were elevated to a position equalling that of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas. They participated in appointing and replacing the *kalons*, verified revenue and expenditure, inspected the borders in spring and autumn, and so on. Tibet's external relations, too, fell into the hands of Manchu commanders, including the Dalai Lama's correspondence with neighbouring countries. In 1792, the Qing administration altered the procedure of electing the Dalai Lama. Previously he was chosen on

the strength of oracles and the predictions of the grand lamas. Now, the Qing court sent the Dazhaosi lamasery in Lhasa a golden vase for the drawing of lots for the 'reincarnation' (*hubilgang*) to succeed the Dalai Lama who had died. And to keep down the local people the Qing garrison in Tibet was greatly reinforced.

The successive military campaigns widened the possessions of the Qing empire, and placed various independent states within its sphere of influence.

Risings Against the Qing

Increased taxes to meet military costs led to ever greater exploitation, and the mounting national oppression and economic pressure generated disaffection and impelled peasant risings.

The biggest of the popular actions of the early 18th century occurred on Taiwan. It was precipitated by unlawful requisitions and police freebooting. The rising began in Gangshan, a township some 30 *li* from the principal city of Taiwan, in the spring of 1721. Several hundred rebels headed by Zhu Yigui inflicted a succession of defeats on the local troops.³³ The Zhu group was soon backed in the southern part of the island by rebels headed by Du Junying. On 21 May the joint rebel force attacked and captured the city of Taiwan, and thereupon, in swift succession, all the strategic points on the island. Zhu Yigui, who was declared a descendant of the Ming royal house (by name of Zhu), was made ruler of Taiwan. He adopted the title of emperor and called his reign Yonghe (Everlasting Peace). Thereupon, this leader of peasant lineage issued rules reviving the national customs of the Chinese people.

While the Qing authorities of Fujian were feverishly gathering a force to ship to Taiwan, quarrels that soon developed into an armed conflict broke out between Zhu and Du Junying. Taking advantage of this, a large Qing army landed on the island, suppressed the rising, and meted out summary punishment. Thereafter, the Qing greatly increased their garrison in Taiwan.

In 1774, an uprising erupted in Shandong province, organised by members of the secret Qing Shui (Pure Water) society. The rising was provoked by the arrest of an influential member of the sect, one Wang Lun. On 3 October armed peasants took the county town of Shouzhong by storm, and freed Wang from the local gaol. Then, capturing a number of other county towns, the rebels laid siege to the city of Linqing on the Grand Canal. When the bigger part of the city—known as the 'old town'—fell into rebel hands, the Manchu garrison locked itself up in the local fortress. The rebel operations at a point along the Grand Canal, the waterway that brought food

from the South to the imperial capital, alarmed the royal court. A strong military force was dispatched to the area. Crushing the rebels near Linqing, government troops broke into the 'old town' on 27 October. Reluctant to be captured alive, Wang Lun had fire set to his house, and died in the flames together with his companions. The Qing dealt mercilessly with the participants in the uprising. Out of the 1,372 that they managed to capture, more than a thousand were executed.³⁴

Another rising erupted on Taiwan in early 1787. This one began when a punitive unit of 300 men gutted several villages in the northern part of the island. Angered by the conduct of the troops, who demanded the surrender of members of the Heaven and Earth society, the peasants took up arms. Lin Shuangwen, a distinguished member of the secret society, took command. The rebels fell upon the punitive unit and destroyed it. On 17 January 1787 they captured Zhanghua, and a few days later Zhuluo, a town in the heart of the island. While Lin Shuangwen operated in the north, rebels under Zhuang Datian captured Fengshan in the south of the island. The insurrection thus engulfed all Taiwan. Only two points remained under the control of the Qing authorities—the port of Danshui at the northern tip of the island, and the city of Taiwan. Lin Shuangwen, scion of a rich family, was declared ruler with the reign title *Shun tian* (Obeying Heaven). Seeing that half-measures would be to no avail, the Qing dispatched a large armed force to Taiwan, and exploiting the long-time hostility between the settlers from Zhanzhou and Quanzhou, Manchu general Fukuan suppressed the rising in a fairly short time. Lin Shuangwen was captured in February 1788, and Zhuang Datian in March. Both were shipped to Beijing, and executed.

In the beginning of 1735, a rising of the Miao people broke out in the eastern part of Guizhou province. The rebellion was brought on by an arbitrary increase in the land tax by the local Qing administrators. The rebels captured a number of commanderies and counties. To prevent the rising from spreading, the Qing mobilised the troops of the six neighbouring provinces. But this failed to yield the desired result. Then, infuriated by its setbacks, the Qing command resorted to wholesale reprisals, trying to pacify the local population by fire and sword.

In 1736, a man named Zhang Guangsi was placed at the head of the punitive expedition. By blending promises and threats, he succeeded in splitting the ranks of the rebels. A part of the population, which had been under Chinese influence for a longer time, ceased to resist. This enabled the Qing to mass their forces against those who refused to wear pigtailed and continued to fight back. At least 10,000 people were captured and exterminated in a mopping-up operation, and more than 400,000 died of hunger and exposure in the hills and

forests, where they hid from the carnage loosened by the Qing troops.³⁵

Having put an end to the armed resistance, Zhang Guangsi lost no time to deal with those who had earlier trusted his promises and laid down their arms. More than 1,200 villages were sacked and more than 17,000 people killed. But the rising was not entirely quelled. The rebels withdrew to the western regions of Hunan province, and fought on until 1739. A year later, a new rebellion erupted in an area at the juncture of Hunan and Guangxi provinces. In addition to the Miao, it involved the Yao and Tung. Zhang Guangsi at the head of a 13,000-man army eliminated the chief seats of armed resistance with his usual brutality, and the remainder of the rebels were destroyed by the rural militia (*sanyong*) recruited by Chinese landlords among *declassé* elements.

Anxious to avert further risings of the ethnic minorities, the Qing administrators made some concessions. The Miao tribes in Guizhou province were relieved of taxes, and allowed to follow national custom in the exercise of justice.

In 1755-1758 a large-scale rebellion swept Khalkha, where rebels headed by Prince Tsingundjab were active along the borders of Western Mongolia, helping the followers of Amursana in their unequal struggle against the Qing army. Neither the brutal repression of *arat* herdsmen nor the capture of Tsingundjab broke the spirit of the Mongol insurrectionists. Not until they bribed the local lamas and princes were the Qing able to crush the rising.

Maltreatment and excessive requisitions by Manchu and local rulers in Xinjiang led to a rising of the Uighurs in Wuchitufang in 1764. The rebels routed the local garrison, killed the Manchu governor Sucheng, Khakim-bek Abdullah, and many other despised officials.³⁶ When word of the rising spread, there were disturbances in Yarkend and Aqsu, where the rebels had secretly sent their envoys. But the local rulers employed blandishments to avert a popular rebellion. Wuchitufang remained in the hands of the rebels for three months. The Qing generals, when they finally recaptured the city, loosened a massacre. The more than 10,000 surviving old men and women, and children, were removed to Yili.

In 1771, the Turbot tribes in the western part of Sichuan revolted against the oppressive policies of the Qing. The tribal chiefs in the Dajinchuan and Xiaojinchuan areas concluded an alliance, and inflicted a series of defeats on the Manchus. The central administration executed Qing general Oertai for his military setbacks, and sent a large force against the rebels. It succeeded in capturing Xiaojinchuan. But when Qing troops under Agui entered Dajinchuan region they encountered unexpectedly strong resistance. Making the most of the mountainous terrain, the rebels fought with a ferocity born of

despair. The final subjugation of the Turbats cost the Qing army dearly; its losses are estimated in some sources to have been close to 80,000 dead.

An insurrection of Salars broke out in Gansu province in 1781, precipitated by the interference of the Qing authorities in the religious strife of two hostile sects—the followers of a 'new teaching' led by Ma Mingxin, who proposed in 1761 that the Koran should be read aloud, and the followers of the 'old teaching', who were opposed to this innovation. There were many merchants, chiefly livestock traders, among the supporters of the 'new teaching'. The 'old teaching' was championed mainly by the feudal gentry closely associated with the Qing imperial administration. The Salars' rising began soon after the local Qing authorities used a bloody clash between the two sects at Xunhua as an excuse to send troops and subdue the exponents of the 'new teaching'. The rebels smashed the punitive expedition and captured the city of Hezhou. Then, crossing the Taohe, they headed for Lanzhou. The local garrison of 800 men sought shelter behind the city walls after an ineffectual clash.

Learning of the events in Gansu, the Qing court immediately despatched troops. Local inhabitants, and Mongols and Tibetans, were summoned to fight the rebels. Beaten, the latter withdrew west from Lanzhou, taking shelter in a monastery on Hualin Mountain. To force them to surrender, Agui, the Qing general, set fire to the forest surrounding the monastery, and the rebels perished in its flames.

In 1783, wholesale reprisals caused the Salars to rise again. This time they were headed by the *akhun* Tian Wu, a disciple of the executed Ma Mingxin. The rebels built a fortified camp at Shifengbao (in the north of Tongwei county, Gansu province), where they brought their families before starting their armed action. The Qing found out about this in advance and the rebels were compelled to act ahead of the prearranged time. They captured Guyuan (east of Lanzhou), but were badly beaten at the approaches to Fuqiang. Tian Wu was mortally wounded. Qing superiority in numbers and weaponry made the rebels roll back after some heavy fighting. They withdrew to Shifengbao. Government troops destroyed the water conduit, cutting off the rebels' water supplies. On 21 August 1784 they entered Shifengbao. More than 2,000 rebels (and 3,000 members of their families) were either killed or taken prisoner. Rebel leader Zhang Wenqing and other prisoners were brought to Rehe, where the emperor interrogated Zhang, and then had him quartered.

In the latter half of the 18th century, between the 1760s and 80s, seizures of land belonging to non-Chinese by Qing officials and Chinese merchants became more and more frequent. By the end of the 18th century all Miao land near the city of Yongsui (Hunan

province) was taken over by Manchu and Chinese feudalists. The abuses suffered from officials, the oppression of money-lenders, compounded with forcible seizures of land by Chinese settlers, caused deep-going disaffection among the native population. Another Miao rising, under Shi Liudeng, broke out in the Tongren region of Guizhou province early in 1795.³⁷ It was joined by people in the border regions of Hunan—under Shi Sanbao in Yongsui commandery, and Wu Bayue in Qianzhou commandery, and so on. On the eve of the rebellion, rebel leaders Shi Liudeng and Shi Sanbao vowed solemnly to 'drive out the invaders and regain the primordial lands'. Their oath became the rebel motto, bringing together people of all walks of life.

In a short time, the rebels occupied a large area at the juncture of Hunan, Sichuan, and Guizhou provinces. The Qing administration was dismayed. A large force was dispatched to the place of the trouble. Cracking the whip where this appeared effective and dispensing promises where the whip would not work, the Qing command offered official positions to the tribal chiefs if they surrendered, and cash awards to the other rebels. Trusting these promises, some of the chiefs laid down their arms. One of the most popular rebel leaders, Wu Bayue, was captured and executed at the end of 1795. But resistance to government troops did not slacken. The fighting was especially heavy at the township of Pinglong (in the west of Hunan), where the rebels had their main base. Shi Liudeng was killed in the fighting, which lasted for over three months. After the fall of Pinglong, the remnants of the rebel force withdrew to the mountains. Fearing fresh outbreaks of unrest, the Qing administration issued orders to return land to the native people, specifically those who had laid down their arms or had no landed property.

The peasant rebellions and risings of ethnic minorities were evidence of a gathering crisis, which finally erupted at the close of the 18th century.

Diplomatic and Commercial Ties with the Outside World

While still engaged in imposing their rule on China, the Manchus set restrictions on foreign communications, and forbade Chinese merchants to trade by sea. Edicts outlawing overseas trade were issued in 1656, 1662, and 1665 in order to deny the Chinese patriots still resisting Manchu rule on the offshore islands, the aid and support of people on the mainland. The ban on maritime relations with the outside world, and the closed zone along the shore was also meant to prevent any landing of Chinese patriots.

After capturing Taiwan, the Qing lifted the ban on maritime trade in 1683, but some of the restrictions on foreign commerce were left in force. Customs houses were set up in Macao, Zhanzhou, Ningbo, and Yuntaishan to control Chinese and foreign merchants. In Guangzhou (Canton), noted for its great volume of trade with foreigners, a corporation of specially licensed Chinese merchants was instituted in 1720, known as the Cohong, to levy customs duties on foreign ships, and to trade with and control foreigners. In 1728, a similar corporation was established in Zhejiang province expressly for trade with Japan. There were restrictions on both maritime and overland trade with Korea, Annam, and other neighbouring countries.

The restrictive regulation of foreign trade was accompanied with insular isolationism in the field of diplomatic relations. Indeed, the Qing court was not in the habit of sending envoys abroad, for nominally it regarded the rulers of all other countries as its vassals. In keeping with the ancient Chinese concept of the emperor, the Son of Heaven, being the overlord of all peoples in the Under-Heaven, with China as the fulcrum of the universe and all other peoples as barbarians, the Qing functionaries never referred to foreign embassies other than as tributaries. When foreign envoys were received, everything was done to emphasise the inferiority of their rulers to the Chinese emperor, who required them to perform humiliating rituals. The most frequently used diplomatic ritual was the *kowtow*, which consisted in kneeling and touching the forehead to the ground, and in the act of prostration. Any foreign ambassador had to perform this act thrice when crossing the border into the Qing Empire, and again at the emperor's audience. Like the other humiliating rituals, the *kowtow* was often the cause of serious strains between Qing officials and foreign envoys, and obstructed normal diplomatic and commercial relations between China and the outside world.

Out of the neighbouring Asiatic states, Korea, the kingdom of Ryukyu, and Annam had the most stable and regular ties with the Qing Empire. In 1627, when still in the act of conquering China, the Manchu court dispatched troops to Korea in order to preclude its supporting Ming China. The country was sacked. The Korean king had no choice but to sign an agreement that made him dependent on the Manchu court. Attempts to shake off the bondage by refusing to pay tribute, were in vain. In 1637 a large Manchu force under Abahai invaded Korea again, and captured Seoul. The conquerors pillaged the countryside and killed villagers and townsmen. Attacking an offshore island, they found themselves in control of the Korean queen and many other members of the royal family. They smashed the large Korean reinforcements rushing to the aid of the capital, whereupon the king was compelled to

acknowledge the suzerainty of the Manchu dynasty, and promised to send gifts as tribute to Beijing each year. Until 1644, Korea sent envoys to the Manchu court four times yearly, but after the Manchu dynasty ensconced itself on the Chinese throne, the Korean king was allowed to reduce the number of deputations to one a year. In the early years of their rule over China, the Manchu emperors sent ambassadors to Korea fairly frequently, for they had a stake in securing allies. But on capturing new land in the west (Dzungaria and Kashgaria), their communications to the Korean court were sent by couriers or home-bound Korean envoys.

Envoys of the Ryukyu rulers were frequent visitors to the Qing capital. Following a Japanese invasion in 1609, the northern group of islands of the Ryukyu chain became the possession of the Japanese principality of Sazuma, while the southern group remained under the nominal rule of the local king. Though a dependent of Japan, the Ryukyu ruler continued to send envoys to China in order to maintain commercial and other ties. The Ryukyu rulers even used two distinct calendars: the Chinese and the Japanese. As under the Ming, the Ryukyu ambassadors were expected to come to the Qing capital once in two years. By sending gifts and young men of noble lineage to study Confucian canons, the Ryukyu rulers succeeded in creating the illusion of a tributary relationship, enabling Ryukyu merchants to maintain duty-free commerce with China. The Ryukyu envoys crossed the sea to Minanzhen in Fujian province, and usually turned over the gifts to Qing officials for shipment to Beijing, while staying on to trade with local merchants. The Dragon Throne was content to receive the gifts, which it regarded as tribute from a vassal, but sent no envoys to Ryukyu. Envoys were sent only to present patents of investiture, as in 1663, 1683, 1719, 1756 and 1800.

Diplomatic contacts with Annam were less regular than with Korea and Ryukyu, though by the rules of the Qing court the Annam authorities were expected to send envoys with gifts once every three years. Like the envoys of other countries that brought gifts to Beijing, those of Annam engaged in trade once they had fulfilled their diplomatic mission. Envoys of Siam, Burma, and Nepal came to the Qing capital for much the same purpose.

The 'vassals' sent gifts to the Qing ruler more or less regularly, and received gifts in return. But, in fact, they were free to deal independently with all matters of home and foreign policy. This was best seen when the state interests of these lands and those of Qing China came into collision. In some cases, however, their rulers sought Chinese support to achieve their goals. The King of Siam, who ascended the throne in 1781, for example, wanted Chinese support in his war against Burma, and sent envoys to Beijing in 1786. The Chinese dignitaries received the Siamese envoys and gave them

their patent of investiture, putting the King of Siam down as one more of their 'tributaries'.

The relationship between the Qing Empire and Japan was a special one. Following the devastating forays of Japanese corsairs along the Chinese seaboard in the mid-16th century, and the Toyotomi Hideyoshi campaigns in Korea in 1592 and 1597, diplomatic contacts between the China of the Mings and Japan were broken off. Still, Chinese trading junks appeared now and again along the Japanese coast, and Japanese junks along the China coast. Nagasaki, where in 1600 Chinese merchants established a trading factory, was the chief centre of Sino-Japanese trade. The Japanese also traded with China on the Ryukyu islands and Taiwan, where they bought large amounts of sugar. At the time of the Manchu invasion Chinese patriots had repeatedly appealed for aid to the Japanese authorities, but were invariably turned down because the Japanese did not think their intervention in China's internal affairs would be of any advantage to them. After capturing Taiwan, the Qing administration sent an envoy to Japan in 1684. Thirteen merchant junks were also sent there. This inaugurated regular trading between Qing-ruled China and Japan. While allowing Chinese merchants to land in Nagasaki, and obtaining considerable profit from the trading between Ryukyu and China, the Japanese government evaded diplomatic contacts with the Qing Empire, due, among other things, to the isolationist policy of the Shogunate.

Europeans tried to establish diplomatic and trading relations with China long before the Manchus invaded that faraway country. The first to reach it by sea were the Portuguese, who had taken possession of the seaport of Malacca in 1511. In 1515 they established themselves in Tamao, on an island off the Guangdong shore, frequently visited by merchant junks voyaging from China to the South Seas.³⁸ In 1517, Tamao was visited by five Portuguese and four Malaccan ships under the command of Fernao de Andrade. The Portuguese commander obtained permission to trade, and set out for Guangzhou with two of his ships. A Portuguese embassy was set up, headed by Thome Pires, with instructions to come to terms with the Chinese government. While the embassy awaited permission to go to Beijing, Portuguese seamen and traders in Tamao began attacking passing junks and plundering the populace. When word of this reached the emperor, he ordered Pires and his men out of the country, and issued an edict banishing all Portuguese. A new embassy with Martin de Mello at its head arrived in 1522. It was fitted out directly from Lisbon, and was authorised to establish a trading factory in the vicinity of the Chinese coast. But the Portuguese carracks were attacked by a Chinese fleet, precluding any negotiations. Losing two of their ships, the Portuguese hastily withdrew.

Thereafter they made the factory near Ningbo their chief trading outlet. In the late 1540s, there were more than 3,000 people there, some 1,200 of them Portuguese. From this base the latter raided neighbouring coastal cities, pillaging and taking people into slavery. The Chinese authorities responded with armed expeditions against them and, finally, the Portuguese had to abandon the factory in 1548.

In the early 1550s Macao, a town on a sand spit projecting into the Xijiang (Pearl River) delta, became the outpost of Portuguese trade with China.³⁹ The Portuguese had secured use of the locality from the local authorities in 1537 'to dry their merchandise after its long voyage by sea', and built storehouses. Twenty years later a township with a fortress and large warehouses had arisen in place of the former fishermen's settlement. To prevent the Portuguese from extending their colony, the Chinese authorities built a wall across the neck of the peninsula in 1573; by cutting off Macao from the rest of the island and its villages, the Chinese were able to control the colony's food supplies. In 1587, a special Chinese functionary was appointed to govern the town in the name of the Dragon Throne. But the functionary's powers were no more than nominal. To check the influx of Europeans, the Chinese authorities forbade the Portuguese to build any more houses in Macao (including churches). The edict was issued in 1614, but it did not help: construction continued, because many local people moved to the Portuguese colony.

Following the installation of the Manchu dynasty on the Chinese throne, a Qing garrison of 1,000 men was stationed in Macao in 1651, and a customs house was opened in 1688. In 1725 the number of foreign ships allowed annually into Macao harbour was limited to 25.⁴⁰ In 1732 the Qing required the Portuguese to inform them in detail about each foreign ship arriving in Macao. For crimes committed against Chinese, the Portuguese and any other inhabitants of the colony were criminally responsible before Chinese law.

To soften the restrictions, to win trading privileges and scope for the activity of their missionaries, the Portuguese repeatedly sent embassies to Beijing. But despite being admitted into the presence of the emperor (in 1670, 1678, 1727, and 1753), the embassies, which were extremely costly, proved ineffective.⁴¹ In the meantime, the competition of Dutch and, notably, British traders at the turn of the 18th century gradually caused Macao to lose importance as a major missionary and commercial centre of the Portuguese. It was reduced to a place of residence for foreign merchants, missionaries, and adventurers.

Spain came to the China Seas on the heels of the Portuguese. It captured the Philippines in 1571, and made contact with Chinese

merchants who had been trading extensively with the local people for centuries. In 1575 two Spanish monks came to Guangzhou from Manila, and offered the Chinese to conclude an alliance with their country. Lacking authority for this, the local officials had the monks expelled.

But to consolidate the initial contacts, the government of King Philip II sent an official embassy to China under Martin Ignatius in 1580. The ship that proceeded with the envoy from Manila lost its way, and made land north of Guangzhou. When the ambassador and his companions went ashore they were seized by the coastal guard and put in gaol. Through the mediation of the Portuguese in Macao, they were allowed to return to Manila.

In 1598, the governor of the Philippines fitted out two galleons for Taiwan, but they landed in Guangzhou, where Spain had finally managed to conclude a trade agreement. Later, rivalling the Dutch who had established a fort, Zeeland, in Taiwan (near Anping) in 1624, the Spanish built Fort San Salvador near Jilung (Keelung) in the same year, and Fort San Domingo near Danshui (Tansui) in 1629.

Long before any Portuguese and Spanish colonialists had managed to entrench themselves on the China coast, Chinese settlers from Fujian and Guangdong provinces streamed in large numbers to countries in South-East Asia. When the Spanish fort was first built in Manila (in 1571) there were only 40 Chinese in the area, whereas by 1603 their number had grown to more than 30,000 (against the 800 Spaniards). In 1603, wary of the mounting influence of Chinese merchants and settlers, and seeing it as a threat to their rule, egged on by Catholic missionaries, the Spanish authorities loosened a slaughter in which some 25,000 Chinese were wiped out. In 1639-1640 one more massacre cost more than 20,000 Chinese their lives.⁴² Similar carnage occurred on the Philippines in 1662 and 1686. Later, the method of outright butchery gave way to forcible removal of Chinese from the Spanish colony. The reason, largely, was fear of the economic and political influence of the Chinese community.

In 1603, the Dutch East India Company tried to establish relations with the Chinese government but this was aborted by the Portuguese. The following year, it sent its agent to Beijing with a Siamese embassy. But his junk was shipwrecked, and he drowned. In 1607, a Dutch fleet dropped anchor in the estuary of the Xi river in a fresh attempt to contact the Chinese authorities, but again it was unsuccessful. Not until 1622, after a military setback at Macao, did the Dutch finally gain a foothold on the Penghuliedao (Pescadore) islands. They began building a fort, and forcibly mobilised 1,500 Chinese workmen. When the authorities learned of this, they ordered the foreigners off the islands, but the Dutch refused to go. They

demanding free trade, and urged the Chinese to withdraw the trading permit of the Spanish. A Dutch fleet blockaded the coast, and the Chinese authorities were compelled to back down: in 1624 they permitted the Dutch to instal themselves in Taiwan, where some 25,000 Chinese had settled by then.

Driving the Japanese off the island in 1628, and the Spanish in 1642, the Dutch behaved as complete masters of Taiwan. They fomented hostility between the Chinese settlers and the natives, diverting disaffection and wrath from themselves. In 1652, the Dutch suppressed a Chinese rising against their colonial administration, and did so with extraordinary cruelty. Some 9,000 people were killed or captured. There were repercussions on the mainland. The general sense of outrage made Zheng Chenggong ban trade with the Dutch. Denied the usual considerable profits, the Dutch in Taiwan sent an agent to negotiate with Zheng in 1657. He agreed to let them resume trading, but in addition to the payment of 5,000 *liang* of silver imposed an annual tribute of 100,000 crossbows for his troops and 1,000 *piculs* of saltpetre.⁴³ In the spring of 1661, when Zheng's troops came under Manchu pressure on the mainland, they crossed to Taiwan and, after a nine-months' siege of Fort Zeeland, expelled the Dutch.

Six years before, a Dutch embassy had journeyed from Batavia to Guangzhou, where it lavished bribes to obtain a permit to travel to Beijing. In July 1656, the Dutch envoys came to the Qing capital. Following an audience with the emperor, at which not a word was passed between him and any of the envoys, the Dutch were given permission to come to Beijing every eight years for the payment of tribute. In 1663, having helped Qing troops to capture Amoy, they were officially allowed to bring merchandise to Fujian province once every two years. This privilege was withdrawn in 1666, but even before that the Dutch East India Company had sent another embassy to the emperor. The envoys landed in Fuzhou in August 1666, and reached Beijing in June 1667. Though they fulfilled all that the court ritual demanded, and though they *kowtowed* as prescribed, their mission failed. Not until practically a century later (in 1762), thanks to the activity of other European powers, notably Britain, was a Dutch trading factory allowed to be opened near Guangzhou. But though they had gained access to the China market, they did not use their opportunity to any greater extent than sending three or four ships annually to Guangzhou from Java or the home country. This was evidently due to the general decline of Dutch power. Seeking to improve their position, the Dutch sent Isaac Ticin, former chief of the Dutch factory in Nagasaki, to Beijing at the head of an embassy in 1795. But his attempt to win additional privileges failed.

The British had begun looking for sea routes to China in the latter half of the 16th century. In 1596, sailing round Africa, an expedition under B. Wood⁴⁴ set out for China with a message from Queen Elizabeth requesting the Chinese emperor to allow her subjects to visit his country freely and trade on an equal footing with subjects of other lands. But the ships sank en route and the Queen's message never reached its address.

In 1613, the British East India Company set up a factory on Hirado Island off Japan, and endeavoured to establish relations with China through the mainland merchants visiting Japan. Despite rich gifts, however, none of the Chinese dared deliver the letter addressed by King James to the Chinese emperor. In 1634, following a cease-fire agreement with the Portuguese viceroy of Goa, which allowed for free trade in China, the British sent a merchantman, *London*, to Macao. Two years later, four British merchantmen under Captain J. Weddell dropped anchor there, and, following some military pressure, obtained a trading permit from the local authorities.

The interference of the Portuguese and the high duties imposed by the Chinese in Macao, prompted the British merchants to look for a more convenient trading site. Following expeditions in 1670 and 1672, a factory was established on Taiwan. In 1676, British merchants also gained a foothold in Amoy, where trade with the local people proved highly profitable. But after the port was captured by the Qing, the British factory had to close down. In 1685, British trade through Amoy was resumed, and in 1699 British merchants established themselves near Guangzhou, and in the following year also on the Zhoushan islands in the estuary of the Yangzi.

With trading seemingly stable, the British East India Company founded a permanent factory beside the city wall of Guangzhou in 1715. By an agreement concluded with the superintendent of the local customs, British merchants were permitted to trade freely and, moreover, were not subject to the Qing law. Under clause 8 of the agreement, the chief of customs promised to protect the British against any obtrusions of the Chinese, and against unlawful requisitions.

When a monopoly trade corporation, the Cohong, was founded in Guangzhou in 1720, foreign traders lodged a strong protest with the result that the following year the Qing re-established free trade. Not until some time later did the Cohong resume its activity, and was placed in charge of all matters relating to foreign trade. In 1757, anxious to prevent any growth of European influence, the Qing court forbade foreign trade along the China coast, confining it to just Guangzhou.

In 1759, to get the order repealed, the British merchants sent a petition to the emperor, accusing the local authorities of unlawful

requisitions. The letter was delivered to Beijing for a big bribe, and the customs chief in Guangzhou was replaced, some of the more exorbitant levies were repealed, but the Cohong's monopoly on foreign trade was retained.

To obtain broader access to Chinese markets, the British government fitted out an embassy to Beijing in 1787 under Colonel Charles Cathcart, formerly chief-of-staff of the Bengali army.⁴⁵ He was to negotiate a strip of land on the mainland or an island off the shore where trading conditions would be made more favourable than at Guangzhou. But the envoy died en route, and the mission returned empty-handed.

The unfavourable outcome of the first diplomatic mission did not discourage a second one. Under pressure of merchants and manufacturers, the British government fitted out a new mission in 1791, headed by an experienced diplomat and functionary, Lord Macartney, who had been ambassador to Russia and was governor of Madras in India from 1780 to 1785. The embassy was to obtain outlets for British trade in ports near the tea-growing and silk areas, and one or two points along the coast for the storage of goods and for residence. It was to establish a permanent diplomatic mission in Beijing, and obtain the repeal of restrictions on trade and the personal freedom of British subjects. The embassy was also to have helped widen the range of goods brought to China by acquainting local merchants with samples of British-made merchandise.

On 26 September 1792 the embassy left Britain on three ships. On 25 July 1793 it arrived at the estuary of the Baihe near Tianjin (Tientsin), from where it set out for Beijing. The boats and carts that carried Macartney and members of his mission had the following inscriptions made on them by the Chinese guides: 'Embassy with tribute from the British king'. Leaving part of his party in Yuanmingyuan, the emperor's summer residence near Beijing, Macartney went on to Rehe (Chengteh), where the emperor was at that time. Macartney was invited to a reception on the emperor's birthday, and was allowed to stay for the performance of the royal theatre, but his attempts to begin negotiations were all aborted. He returned to Beijing, where the emperor soon arrived as well. But successive attempts to start talks were turned down. Seeing that the Qing wished to get rid of the embassy, Macartney addressed the grand councillors in a letter containing the following demands: 1) that the English be allowed to trade freely at Ningbo, Tianjin, and the Zhoushan islands; 2) that they be allowed a warehouse in Beijing on the same terms as the Russians; 3) that they be allowed some point on the Zhoushan islands for storing goods and as residence for British merchants; 4) that the same privilege be allowed near Guangzhou or that English merchants be allowed to reside in the city the year

round, with freedom of movement and occupation; 5) that the transit duties for the movement of goods between Guangzhou and Macao be abolished or reduced to what they were in 1782; 6) that all charges except the imperial duties be forbidden and that the tariffs approved by the emperor be given to the English.

On 7 October, an imperial edict rejecting all these demands was delivered to Macartney, and the British mission left Beijing on the same day, setting out south along the Grand Canal. On 17 March 1794, the embassy left Macao, and returned to Portsmouth on 10 June. Though none of Macartney's demands had been accepted, trade with China continued with considerable profit. In 1795, thirty British merchantmen called at Guangzhou (against five in 1736).

In 1685, Siam was visited by a French mission under Chevalier de Chaumont. It was accompanied by Jesuit missionaries, two of whom stayed in Siam, while five continued to China. Reaching Macao in a Chinese junk, they went on to Ningbo. The central administration allowed them to come to Beijing, hoping to benefit from their knowledge of astronomy and other sciences. In February 1688 the missionaries were brought into the presence of the emperor. He ordered 50 *liang* of silver to be given to each of them, and permitted two—Gerbillon and Bouver—to stay in the capital.

At the close of 1698, the frigate *Amphitrite* was the first French ship to drop anchor off Guangzhou. Apart from merchandise, it brought eleven French missionaries. From then on, French ships continued visiting the China coast (Guangzhou and Amoy), but the visits were by far less frequent than those of British merchantmen. Eager to expand commerce with China, the French sent a mission to Guangzhou under d'Antrecasto, commander of naval forces in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁶ In addition to exacting payment of a debt (of 600,000 piastres) from the merchants of the Cohong, and to other business relating to the trade engaged in by French subjects, the head of the mission had a diplomatic assignment. He was to prevail on the Chinese authorities to grant trading privileges to the French as the strongest competitors of the British. Leaving Pondicherry, the French possession in India, in two ships in October 1786, the mission arrived in the estuary of the Xijiang in February of the following year. Since no one in Guangzhou was authorised to negotiate with him, the French admiral contacted the viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, who was then in Shaozhou to deal with the rebellion in Taiwan. The Frenchman offered the Qing dignitary the use of French ships to suppress the rebels. The offer was turned down, and the French mission left Guangzhou.

The first U.S. trader entered Guangzhou harbour in August 1784. The voyage, which yielded its sponsors a 25 per cent profit, aroused considerable enthusiasm among American merchants. They began

fitting out new expeditions. In 1786, five U.S. ships visited Guangzhou, and in 1789 as many as fifteen.⁴⁷

In 1731, the first Danish ship came to Guangzhou, and the following year the first Swedish one. Then, in the 1770s and 1780s, there were German, Austrian, Italian, and other visitors. By the end of the 18th century, China had commercial ties with many European states, though their share in the China trade was modest.

In its early period, the Qing dynasty confined itself to merely restricting commercial and diplomatic contacts with European countries. Now it sought complete isolation from the outside world. This was reflected in the guarded treatment of foreigners, especially of missionaries. Earlier on, the Manchus had quite readily accepted the services of European missionaries—adepts in military matters, astronomy, mathematics, map-making, and other sciences. The Dragon Throne even received legates from the Pope (in 1705, 1720, and 1725). Then, restrictions were imposed on missionary activity, and finally all Catholic missionaries were expelled from China. This resolute act was meant to avert the serious political complications that were liable to arise from the missionaries' impertinent interference in China's internal affairs.

Russo-Chinese Relations

The progress of Russian Cossack pioneers to the shores of the Pacific Ocean brought about the initial contacts between Russia and China in the early 17th century. In 1618, the Tomsk Cossack Ivan Petlin and a few soldiers came to Beijing on the instructions of the Tobolsk governor. During his stay in the Chinese capital, the observant Petlin collected much interesting information about the Chinese state and the way of life of its people. Petlin also brought back a scroll from the Ming emperor whose content did not become known until 1675 owing to the absence of anyone versed in Chinese. In that scroll, Emperor Wangli invited Russians to send envoys and to trade with China.⁴⁸

The bold expeditions of Russian pioneers—notably those of V.D. Poyarkov (1643-1646) and E.P. Khabarov (1649-1652) to the Amur—were thrusting into new lands. In 1652, the Russians founded Irkutsk. In 1653, they founded Nerchinsk on a tributary of the Shilka. A little earlier, the fort of Albazin had been built on the upper Amur, and from 1682 on it became the seat of the special Albazin *voivodeship*.

The economic development of the Amur valley by the Russian settlers, the construction of towns and forts, alarmed the Qing rulers who then controlled only a small portion of Southern Manchuria.

To extend their influence among the neighbouring tribes of Evenks, Daours, Duchers, and others, who were tributaries of the Russian tsar, the Qing generals dispatched armed expeditions against the small Cossack bands. In 1652, a Manchu force of 2,000 from Ningguta made a surprise attack on Khabarov's troop. The foray was repulsed, but Khabarov was compelled to withdraw from the estuary of the Sungari river (Songhuajiang) to the upper reaches of the Amur for reinforcements, armaments, and food supplies.

That year the Russian government sent a trade mission to China under the *boyar* Fedor Baikov. Its chief purpose was to study the chances of trading with China and to invite Chinese merchants to Russia. The Baikov mission was, in effect, the first official embassy of the Russian government, sent with the purpose of establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with faraway China. The Tsar's message to the Qing emperor said the Russian ruler (Alexei Mikhailovich) wished to have strong bonds of friendship, love, and correspondence with the Chinese. Baikov reached Beijing in March 1656 with the tsar's instructions and the message he had received two years before when departing from Tobolsk. From the day he arrived in the Chinese capital, the Russian envoy had serious friction with the Qing officials, who wanted him to perform the humiliating rites of Confucian etiquette, including the *kowtow*. Baikov turned over the gifts he had brought, but categorically refused to hand the tsar's message to anyone but the emperor. Despite the Qing officials' threats to execute him for disobeying their orders, the Russian envoy would not budge, demanding an audience with the emperor. Failing to obtain it, Baikov had no choice but to leave Beijing on 7 September 1656.

The goods that Baikov brought back from China persuaded the Russian tsar to fit out a new embassy in 1658, this time under Ivan Perfiliev. It reached Beijing in the summer of 1660.⁴⁹ The emperor refused to receive it, and it returned to Moscow in 1662 with a caravan of goods and with an official Chinese document which, however, no one was able to read. Its contents did not become known until 1675, when it was translated into Russian along with the earlier document delivered by Petlin. It said the emperor was accepting the 'tribute' sent by the Russian throne and conveyed it his 'grace and favour'.

The failure of Perfiliev's embassy, like that of Baikov's, was due partly to the complicated political situation, with the Qing authorities in Southern Manchuria seeking to extend their control to territories inhabited and developed by Russian settlers in the upper and middle reaches of the Amur. In 1658 the detachment of Onufry Stepanov (who succeeded Khabarov) was attacked by a large Manchu force in the region between the Sungari and Huerha rivers. Stepanov

was killed, while his detachment retreated after losing most of its men.

In March 1675, the Russian government sent another embassy to Beijing, headed by Nikolai Spafary (Milescu). The tsar's message of 28 February 1675, which Spafary was to turn over to the Qing emperor, said the Russian monarch wished to be on gracious neighbourly terms of goodwill, friendship and affection, and in constant correspondence with the ruler of China. Spafary was instructed to urge Chinese merchants to come to Russia with their goods, and to promise them various privileges. In addition to its diplomatic and commercial aims, the embassy was also entrusted with a number of tasks of a purely scientific nature.

Spafary, who was accompanied by merchants and soldiers, arrived in Beijing on 15 May 1676. The emperor granted him an audience, and the Russian merchants were given permission to sell their goods. But later the treatment of the Russian embassy changed. Since Spafary had received the emperor's gifts without kneeling, thus breaching accepted ritual, the Manchu officials gave him no message to take back to the tsar. They declared that if the Russians continued to trouble the 'borders' of the Qing state and Russian envoys breached the rites adopted at the Chinese court, the Qing would not reply to the Russian tsar's messages, and would deny his envoys and merchants admission to the country. Since they refused to discuss the matter any further, Spafary departed from Beijing on 1 September 1677, reaching Moscow on 5 January 1678.⁵⁰

In the meantime, having subdued the Chinese patriots on the mainland, the Qing court redoubled its armed activity in the upper and middle reaches of the Amur in a bid to drive out the Russians and to annex the area. In 1682, Manchu Emperor Kangxi set out from Beijing to Mukden. Though his purpose, as officially announced, was to pay his respects at the graves of his ancestors for the successful culmination of hostilities in the South-East, the journey was really one of inspection. After a first-hand study of the military and political situation in the area, the emperor returned to Beijing and sent the Manchu dignitary, Langtan, to Albazin to gather intelligence under guise of deer hunting. On ascertaining that the Russian troops in the area were small in number, the emperor ordered preparations for a military campaign. In 1683 a fort was built on the right bank of the Amur below the estuary of the Zeya, named Sahaliang-wula-huotuon (Aihun). Postal stations were established to transmit official papers and provisions, and additional troops were dispatched to Mukden from China proper.

In June 1683 a large Manchu force suddenly attacked the detachment of Gr. Mylnikov at Aihun. Badly outnumbered, the small Russian force of 67 Cossacks was defeated. In July 1684, Manchu

troops approached Albazin on boats and captured some thirty Russians who happened to be outside the fortifications. But the Manchus did not venture to attack the fort. A year later, Qing troops reappeared in the vicinity. Commander Pengchun with over 10,000 bannermen and 150 field and 50 siege guns ordered Albazin to surrender.⁵¹ But the local governor, Alexei Tolbusin, who had only 450 men under his command, with three guns and only four cannonballs, defied Pengchun. When the garrison ran out of gunpowder and lead, it defended itself with stones, killing some 150 Manchus in this fashion. But the strength was much too unequal. Seeing that the fort was ablaze, and the lives of women and children were in danger, Tolbusin entered into negotiations with the Manchus. As a result, the Russians were permitted to leave Albazin with their families and arms.

Ivan Vlasov, governor of Nerchinsk, reported this to the Russian government. The Cossacks who arrived from Albazin with their chief, Tolbusin, were ordered back to the fort in August of the same year. In place of the fort, which the Manchus had razed to the ground, they built a new one with mud walls and a deep moat. On 6 July 1686, Manchu bannermen again approached Albazin, and again ordered its garrison to surrender. By that time the fort had a population of 826, including farmers and merchants, with eight copper cannon, three arquebuses, a horse-mounted gun, 140 handgrenades, several iron cannonballs, gunpowder, and lead. The Manchus numbered more than 8,000, and had 400 siege guns.⁵² The Manchu siege lasted five months. In the spring of 1687 the plight of the Russian garrison became critical: an epidemic of scurvy had broken out. By May only seventy men remained. But having lost 2,500 men and failing to capture the fort, the Manchus lifted the siege on the emperor's order in December 1686, but continued to blockade Albazin on all sides.

In May 1685, when he sent his troops to Albazin, the emperor despatched a message to the Russian tsar offering negotiations. He expressed displeasure at the activity of the Albazin Cossacks and demanded that they withdraw from the Amur.⁵³ The Russian government, engaged in preparations for war with Turkey, decided to seek a peaceful settlement of its conflict with China. At the end of January 1686 it fitted out an embassy under F. A. Golovin. In an advance notice sent by messengers to Beijing, the Russian government protested the Qing incursions into Russian territory, stressing that if the emperor had sent envoys before resorting to arms, all questions in dispute could have been settled peacefully. It called on the emperor to send envoys, and to pull back his troops to their original positions. In November 1686, the Tsar's messengers reached Beijing and were admitted into the presence of the emperor.⁵⁴ On

6 May 1687, the blockade of Albazin was lifted, but the Qing troops did not withdraw from Russian territory. They made camp some five *versts* down the Amur from the Russian fort.

Though the Dragon Throne agreed to negotiate, it urged the Mongol khans to attack the Russians. In early January 1688, Ochiroi Khan (Tushetu Khan) was prevailed upon to mount an assault on Selenginsk and Udinsk. The Moscow riflemen and Siberian Cossacks accompanying Golovin, drove him back. Word of the Mongol khan's defeat spurred the emperor to send emissaries to Golovin's camp. On learning of another defeat of Tushetu Khan (this time by Galdan), he issued orders to recall his embassy before it reached the Russians.

In September 1688, Qing messengers arrived in Selenginsk, asking the Russian envoy to put off the negotiations until the following summer, ostensibly because of the rainy season. The time thus gained the Manchus hoped to use to crush Galdan. Golovin acquiesced, but warned that if the emperor delayed too long or if his troops at Albazin molested the local people or damaged their crops, the Russians would resort to force, with the blame for this falling on the Manchu emperor. In January 1689, the Russian envoy sent a message to Beijing, reminding the emperor of the coming negotiations.

On 16 July, Qing commissioners accompanied by 76 war junks and an army of 8,000 arrived at Nerchinsk. Overnight, a huge military camp of 15,000 men sprang up beside the small town with its garrison of 600. On 9 August, Golovin came to Nerchinsk with a force of riflemen, and on 12 August his negotiations with Manchu commissioner Songotu began in a tent put up half a *verst* from the town. The Catholic missionaries Gerbillon, a Frenchman, and Pereira, a Portuguese, interpreted the Chinese into French. At first the Qing envoys laid claim to land north of the Amur territory, maintaining that China had 'held possession' of it since the time of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan. To these claims they added the demand that Russia should hand over the Evenk prince, Gantimur, who had gone over to the Russians with his entire clan in 1664, had become a Russian subject, and had adopted the Christian Orthodox faith. Golovin and his aides refused to discuss these absurd demands of the Qing. Since Russians had for a long time held possession of the Amur territory and since Prince Gantimur, the lawful owner of the Daour lands, had voluntarily become a Russian subject, Golovin offered to take the Amur as a convenient and natural border between the two countries. Golovin's proposal encountered strong Manchu objections. The Qing emissaries insisted that he accept their maximal claim, and draw the border through Nerchinsk. To exert pressure, they soon broke off the talks and moved their troops closer to Nerchinsk, blockading it from all sides. In face of these military moves and the deteriorating conditions in beleaguered Nerchinsk

(distemper among horses and camels), on 23 August, the Russian envoy decided to make an extreme concession, giving up Albazin. A treaty was concluded on 27 August, and its texts in Russian, Manchu, and Latin were exchanged.

The Nerchinsk Treaty, of seven clauses, provided for the fixing of a border, and the retention of deserters who had changed sides before the conclusion of the peace treaty, defined the procedure of turning over and punishing persons crossing the border and committing plunder or other crimes, and set provisions for mutual trade.*

In the Treaty the border between Russia and the Qing Empire was fixed only in the upper Amur area, with the geographical landmarks as described in the texts permitting of different interpretations. The lands south of the Uda river were left undemarcated on the insistence of the Russian negotiators. The Russians were compelled to consent to the demolition of Albazin, but received sworn promises that no Chinese settlements would ever be established in place of the fort and in the adjoining area. Though it restored peace and trade between the two countries, the Nerchinsk Treaty, which was imposed on Russia by force, meant the loss of a fairly large territory developed by Russian Cossacks and settlers in the forty preceding years.**

* For the text of the Nerchinsk Treaty see *Russko-Kitaiskiye otnosheniya v XVII veke. Materialy i dokumenty*, Vol. 2 (1686-1691), Moscow, 1972, pp. 645-59.

** This was confirmed by M. V. Ladyzhensky, who journeyed along the Amur in the company of the Bulgarian Christopher Buyuklu and 15 Cossacks from the confluence of the Shilka and Argun to the ruins of Albazin in July-August 1832. Inspecting the terrain, Ladyzhensky determined the site of more than 15 settlements established in this part of the river basin by Russian Cossacks and settlers in the mid-17th century. (See A. N. Khokhlov, 'The Journey of Christopher Buyuklu to Beijing and the Amur in 1830-1832' in: *Odinnadtsataya nauchnaya konferentsiya 'Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v Kitaye'. Tezisy i doklady*, Part II, Moscow, 1980, p. 222.)

The small peoples of the Amur valley, who found themselves in the Qing sphere of influence after the conclusion of the Nerchinsk Treaty, either continued to gravitate towards Russia or retained their independence. According to d'Hovre, whom Y. A. Golovkin had despatched to Nerchinsk District in 1806, the Amur 'Tunguses' were loyal to the Russians and considered the Amur lands as belonging to Russia. Writing about the lively barter trade going on between the peoples of the Amur valley and the Yakut population, land surveyor I. E. Kozhevnikov, who had gone 300 *versts* up the Uda river in 1795, stressed the friendly feelings displayed for Russians by Giliaks, who had been paying tribute to the Russian administration in the 17th century. 'The Giliaks,' he wrote in 1803, 'are still steadfast (maintaining loyalty to Russians—*Ed.*), and display respect, civility and bonds of friendship towards Russian people who come to them.' The peasant Fedor Kudriavtsev, who visited the lower reaches of the Amur in 1821-1823, made a special note of the fact that the peoples of the lower Amur (Giliaks, Natkas, Negidals, and others), like the Ains living on Sakhalin, 'are not subject to any government'. (See Russian Foreign Policy Archives, files of the Library of the Asiatic Department, rec. 505, c. 38, p. 25; files of the Chief Archive 1-9, 1828, c. 9, p. 20.)

In March 1692, the Russian government sent an embassy to Beijing under Evert Izbrant Edes, a Dutch trader who had settled in Russia.⁵⁵ Edes followed the route taken by Spafary, and arrived in the Chinese capital on 3 November 1693. Though the envoy had twice been admitted to the imperial court, while his companions were allowed to sell their goods, the embassy was discomfited by the unflagging police surveillance. Complaining that in the message the title of the emperor was given below that of the Russian tsar, Qing officials returned both the message and the gifts. On 19 February 1694 Edes departed from Beijing, and reached Moscow on 1 February of the following year. The imperial edict that followed the memorial of the Lifanyuan (Office for Colonial Affairs), whose officials had negotiated with Edes, permitted Russian merchants to bring goods to the Chinese capital once in three years.⁵⁶

China's long conflict with the Dzungar Khanate compelled the Qing to look for strong allies against that formidable rival. An embassy headed by Tulishen was despatched to the nomad camp of the Kalmyk Khan Ayuoka, on the Volga. It arrived in Tobolsk at the end of September 1713, and in the spring of 1715 returned to Beijing and gave the emperor a detailed record of its travels across Siberia to the Volga. That year a Russian priest arrived in the Chinese capital, setting up what would later be the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission, whose members served the religious needs of captured Albazin inhabitants settled in the north-eastern part of Beijing. Subsequently, the Mission engaged in the study of Chinese, Manchurian, and Mongolian, and translated books from these languages into Russian.*

The losses suffered through the frequent detention of Russian caravans on the Chinese border persuaded the government of Peter the Great to send a new embassy to China under Captain Lev Izmailov of the famous Preobrazhensky Regiment. Leaving St Petersburg in July 1719, the Russian envoy and his retinue of 90 reached Beijing in November 1720.⁵⁷ The ensuing negotiations proved exceedingly difficult, because the Qing were interested primarily in border questions, while the Russians were preoccupied with matters of trade. When word was received in the imperial capital that several hundred Mongols had crossed over into Russian territory, the talks

* Tibetan, too, was studied. The Mission trained such later well-known Orientalists as A. G. Platkovsky, I. K. Rossokhin, A. L. Leontiev, A. G. Vladyskin, P. I. Kamensky, S. V. Lipovtsev, D. P. Sivilov, Z. F. Leontievsky, D. S. Chestnoy, E. I. Sychevsky, P. I. Kafarov, V. P. Vasiliev, K. A. Skayakov, and others. The Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing was headed by N. Y. Bichurin (Iakinth) for more than 13 years (from 1808 to 1821). Bichurin's works on Mongolia and China, published after his return to Russia, won him fame as a leading authority not only in Russia, but also in Western Europe.

broke down. Izmailov was compelled to leave Beijing.

In 1724, at Selenginsk, negotiations began on the return to China of Mongols who had gone over to Russia. The Qing officials insisted on drawing a border between Russia and the Khalkha lands, which had by then been incorporated in the Qing Empire. When Lorenz Lang, who represented Russia, said he was not authorised to discuss the matter, the Chinese officials asked that a Russian envoy should be sent to Beijing. In response to this request, the Russian government fitted out an embassy to China in August 1725 under Count S. L. Vladislavich-Raguzinsky. It arrived in Beijing in November 1726. The imperial authorities held a parade of troops and fired guns in its honour. But hard days followed this rousing reception. The Qing negotiators laid groundless claims to Transbaikalia and other Russian territory. To make the Russian envoy more pliable, his embassy was denied food and water, and was even threatened with imprisonment.⁵⁸ To break the deadlock, Raguzinsky proposed that the talks be transferred to the border. In June 1727 they were resumed, and a treaty was signed in August known as the Bureya Treaty, taking its name from the place where it was concluded—on the Bureya river (100 km south of Selenginsk).

Having his people put up boundary posts along the border, Raguzinsky despatched the text of the treaty to Beijing for its incorporation in the general tract, whose ten articles had been earlier agreed upon at the Chinese capital. Thereupon, the Russian envoy was stunned to see that the tract sent him from Beijing differed substantially from the one that had earlier been co-ordinated with the Qing commissioners. Raguzinsky lodged a protest, and demanded that it be conveyed to the emperor. At first, the Qing officials responded by threatening to evict the Russian caravan that was then in Beijing, but finally gave in. An exchange of signed copies of the accord, known as the Kiachta Tract, took place on the Kiachta river on 14 June 1728. The new treaty established Russia's border with the Mongolian lands that had been incorporated in the Qing Empire. It defined the diplomatic procedure between the two countries (through the Senate of Russia, and the Lifanyuan), and provided for the renewal of the caravan trade with the Chinese capital. The treaty also established the status of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing, which could have three priests and six students of Oriental languages in permanent residence.

The hardships of the war with the Dzungar Khanate compelled the Qing court again to seek the support of the Kalmyk nomads on the Volga. It fitted out an embassy to the Russian tsar to obtain permission for travel to the Kalmyk steppes. On 14 January 1731, the envoys reached Moscow, where they were received with ceremony. On January 26 they were granted an audience by Empress

Anna Ioannovna, who had just ascended the Russian throne, and placed before her a message from the Manchu emperor containing pledges of friendship. In official and unofficial talks, the envoys sought to obtain Russian support for their aggressive plans against Dzungaria. Evading a reply, the Russian government permitted them to travel to the Volga country. Their visit to the Kalmyk khan ended in failure, however, because he acted on the advice of the Russian authorities and declined to engage his troops against the Dzungars. In January 1732, at Tomsk the returning Qing envoys crossed paths with another embassy sent from Beijing following official word of the enthronement of Anna Ioannovna. The second embassy arrived in St Petersburg on 27 April 1732. On the following day, which was the first anniversary of the coronation of the Russian empress, she received the envoys of the Dragon Throne. During the audience, they tendered assurances of the Qing's desire to maintain friendship with Russia. A few days later they set out on their return journey.

Russia was the first European country to be visited by any Chinese envoys. The Qing court sent its diplomats to Russia principally for strategic reasons. When the Dzungar Khanate collapsed in 1755, Qing policy towards Russia changed at once: assurances of friendship gave place to complaints, insults, even threats of war. Another reason of the friction was the more and more frequent desertion to the Russian side of Mongolians fleeing from the oppression of Qing governors.

In 1753, V.A. Miatlev, an ex-naval officer who was governor of Siberia, sent Empress Elizabeth a memorandum suggesting the use of the Amur as a supply line for Kamchatka and other Russian possessions on the Pacific Ocean. He stressed the remoteness of the port of Okhotsk from the main Siberian overland routes, and pointed out the advantages of navigation along the Amur, proposing that a shipyard should be built in its estuary for the Okhotsk flotilla. St Petersburg approved the project, and since the land along the Amur had not been demarcated, decided to send a negotiator to Beijing.⁵⁹

On 29 August 1757, V.F. Bratishchev arrived in the Chinese capital to discuss the renewal of the Kiachta trading, suspended by the Qing. He was also to broach the subject of exchanging legations, and of passage for Russian vessels along the Amur. The talks proved arduous, for the Beijing officials evaded discussion of the specific measures proposed by the Russian plenipotentiary. When Bratishchev referred to an exchange of legations to settle issues in dispute, the official Fu Gong replied that 'sending an envoy from here to Russia is unthinkable, because no reason for it can be found.' He would not dare suggest it to the emperor, he said. Speaking of Russian

shipping on the Amur to supply provisions to Russian possessions in the Far East, the same official said that 'though it is a little thing ... to allow Russian vessels to sail the Amur, the matter requires much deliberation, and must be reported to His Imperial Majesty'. When the emperor, who had originally intended to grant Bratishchev an audience, changed his mind, the Russian negotiator set out on the return journey on 4 September 1757. He had secured the resumption of Kiachta trading, and had settled a few secondary matters concerning, among others, the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing. That was all he could show for his pains.

After Bratishchev's departure, the emperor had his refusal of passage to Russian ships along the Amur transmitted to the Russian government, his pretext being that 'during such passage the peaceful concord may easily be injured by mischief-makers'.⁶⁰ The Dragon Throne's refusal may be traced to the increasingly hostile mood in the higher echelons of the Qing court excited by Amursana's flight to Russian territory.

In 1760, Qing border authorities lodged a protest against the wooden stakes set up in the Kiachta area by the Russian administration to combat contraband trade.⁶¹ In 1764 they suspended trading in Kiachta, and had all Chinese merchants leave the Maimaicheng trade settlement.

The Russian Senate terminated its correspondence with China on receiving letters from the Lifanyuan with uncivilities unusual even between belligerents. Though in 1765 the Qing court proposed reopening negotiations, the Russian government ignored the offer because the official Chinese notice was drawn up in intolerably arrogant terms. In 1767 the Russian border authorities demanded that the Qing return two Mongolians captured in a raid on a Russian guard post. Negotiations ensued in Kiachta, but yielded no result. Early in May, a Captain I.I. Kropotov, sent by the Russian government to settle border issues, arrived in Irkutsk. From that city he proceeded to Selenginsk and then to Kiachta, where he inspected the frontier. The Urga *ambans* (resident officials) came to Kiachta, and negotiations were opened. Suffering from acute pains in his legs, Kropotov was unable to move, and most of the negotiations (which began on 14 June) were therefore conducted in writing, with the Chinese messages translated into Russian by A.L. Leontiev, who subsequently became an eminent scholar of Manchurian and a Sinologist of high repute. After the chief issues had been settled, the Qing officials despatched a memorial to Beijing with a 13-point Russian proposal, and departed from Kiachta. The *ambans* received the emperor's reply before they reached Urga. It said, among other things, that if the Russian negotiator (Kropotov) should reject the proposals of the Qing side, the *ambans* should break off negotiations.

In accordance with the instructions of his government, Kropotov consented to the Manchu proposals, and in so doing made certain concessions. In October 1768, at Kiachta, an agreement was signed providing for the removal of stakes along the border and for the abolition of customs duties paid by Russian merchants. The same agreement amended the wording of the tenth article of the Kiachta Tract, whereby now Qing officials could follow their own traditional procedure of punishing deserters. Among other things, border officers who failed to locate a deserter guilty of a criminal offence within a month were to pay a fine to the injured party. Though since 1750 the Russian Collegium of Foreign Affairs had issued instructions to abstain from any executions on the border, the death sentence, as provided for in the Kiachta Tract, was also retained in the new text, and was invoked by the Qing when presenting their various claims and complaints.

Despite the agreement on the detention of deserters, border crossings continued, especially by Mongolians, who went over in numbers to the Russian side. Frequently, Qing bannermen went deep into Russian territory on the pretext of pursuing fugitives, which created a strained climate in the border areas. On these expeditions, Manchu officials often shifted their border posts into Russian territory, as attested, in particular, by the Commander-in-Chief of Siberian troops, Major-General Strandman, in his report to G. A. Potemkin of 14 December 1790 from Omsk.

In early 1771, a large number of Volga Kalmyks joined the Oirots, who had come to the Volga from Dzungaria to escape the carnage loosened by Qing troops, in a sudden move east to Dzungar lands. The struggle for power among rulers of the Volga tribes, complicated by religious conflicts between exponents of Lamaism and Christianity, compounded with Russian attempts to curb the wilfulness of the Kalmyk khan by establishing a council of elders (*zaisans*) in 1761, were the chief motivation for the Kalmyks and Oirots to follow Khan Ubashi on the long journey. Another motive was the rumour among the Oirots that their former pastures in Dzungaria had been by-passed by the hostile forces. The journey, initiated in the interests of feudalists headed by Ubashi, culminated in tragedy; only 70,000 out of the original 170,000 survived the unbearable hardships of the march.

The Qing court, which kept a watchful eye on the journeys of Kalmyk envoys to Tibet via Beijing, informed the Russian government in November 1771 that it would grant fugitive Kalmyks and Oirots the status of subjects of the Dragon Throne. To keep these tribes under control, it had them settle in areas far away from the border. The Kalmyks were given a site east of Tarbagatai, and the Oirots a site west of Kobdo. The Russian government, then at war

with Turkey, sought a peaceful settlement of the matter; doubly so because some groups of Kalmyk settlers had by then returned on their own initiative to their native Volga steppes. In February 1772, referring to the pertinent article of the Kiachta Tract, Russia demanded that fugitive Kalmyks and Oirots be returned, along with the more than 150 Russians whom they had captured and taken with them. The Qing refused to comply. More, they replied in arrogant terms to the Russian Senate's request that they should locate and return the Russians forcibly driven to China, disclaiming any knowledge of them (though a short time before they had ordered Ubashi not to surrender Russian prisoners if he had any).

In 1791, a Kalmyk lama, Gabun (Sa Mailing) fled to China from Russian territory and spread the rumour that Russia was priming for war against the Dragon Throne. He referred to a letter in Russian allegedly addressed to the Kalmyks who had fled from the Volga to Dzungaria in 1771. Ordering the fugitive lama to be brought to Beijing, the emperor instructed the Lifanyuan to lodge a formal inquiry with the Russian government. Rejecting the war rumours and proving the letter to be a fake, the Russian Senate proposed that the two countries should go about settling their border disputes. On 8 February 1792, an agreement was concluded, with the two parties reaffirming their resolve to abide by the Kiachta Tract and maintain 'gracious accord'. This document, known as the International Act, also established a new procedure for punishing border violators, with either side being entitled to prosecute its own subjects under its own laws. The inclusion of this provision in the International Act was a big gain for the Russian diplomats, because under the new procedure the Qing could no longer interfere in the activity of the Russian border authorities.

Until the mid-17th century Russia's commerce with China proceeded chiefly through Central Asian merchants, whose caravans came fairly frequently to the Siberian cities of Tobolsk, Taru, Surgut, Tomsk, and others. Among the Oriental goods brought by the merchants, Chinese silks and cotton goods ranked first along with rhubarb root, which was highly prized for its medicinal effect.

An important landmark in the history of Russo-Chinese trade was the journey of F. Baikov. The route he opened (across Lake Yamys) quickly attracted the attention of Russian traders. The journey to Beijing of S. Ablin in 1668 was also highly successful. He brought goods to the tune of 1,897,000 roubles, with the tsar's treasury reaping a profit in excess of 300 per cent. Soon the main trade route was laid through Nerchinsk, as pioneered by Ignaty Milovanov in 1670 and Spafary in 1676. With the opening of new avenues of commerce with China and the establishment of direct though sporadic ties with Chinese merchants, Russian traders made less and

less use of Central Asian middlemen.

Since the signing of the Nerchinsk Treaty, trade between Russia and China had expanded substantially especially via Nerchinsk, which became the chief post near the Chinese border. In 1690, according to Russian customs figures, Chinese goods brought there were worth 14,500 roubles, whereas later, in 1692 and 1696, their value climbed to 38,000 and 57,000 roubles respectively (not counting gems and silks).⁶² In ten years of trading with China via Nerchinsk, the turnover rivalled that of the Russian merchants' Central Asian trade and exceeded Russian trade with the West through Pskov, Tikhvin, and Smolensk.

In 1695, on learning of the lucrative private trading via Nerchinsk, the Russian government set out to organise governmental caravan trade with China. A state monopoly was established on the most valuable furs (sable and silver fox) in 1697.⁶³ The first governmental caravan, despatched from Moscow to China in February 1697, yielded a profit of 15 per cent. In 1706, Tsar Peter's government prohibited private persons to take goods by caravan to Beijing. Furthermore, it issued an *ukase* forbidding Russian subjects to sell furs to Central Asian merchants. Owing to these measures, the fifth caravan sent by the government in 1707 yielded the tsar's treasury five to six times more profit than any of the preceding ones.

But later, after 1710, a time of stagnation, and their decline, seemed to set in. One of the reasons was the growth of private merchant capital, which had found loopholes in the government restrictions and reached the Chinese market by devious means. After the 1706 *ukase*, the focus of private Russian commerce had shifted to the Mongolian town of Urga, which was ten to twelve days' travel from Selenginsk. Extensive private trade was also carried on in Beijing under cover of 'embassies' and 'government caravans'. The Qing authorities, it is true, did many an injury to Russian trade by detaining caravans en route, exacting huge customs duties at Kalgan, and harassing Russian merchants in other ways.

A Russian caravan that arrived in the Chinese capital in November 1736, for example, encountered serious obstacles. The caravanserais where the Russian merchants stayed was put under intensive surveillance by the imperial police, which established a strict system of passes for local merchants wishing to deal with the Russians. To deny the Russians the services of Chinese porters and stableboys, local officials resorted to threats, promising to execute any Chinese who ventured to help the Russian traders. In January 1737, Chinese merchants came to the Russian trading agent, Lorenz Lang, and said they could not pay the Russians for their goods, because these had been placed under arrest by the authorities. The merchants also complained that the best Russian goods had been taken from them,

ostensibly for the benefit of the imperial palace. Lang lodged a complaint with the Lifanyuan, protesting against breaches of the fourth article of the Kiachta Tract, which provided for the conduct of free trade. Though the chief of the guards who had denied local traders admission to the Russian merchants unless they paid a bribe was dismissed, the authorities refused to abolish the system of passes. This being so, the Russians quickly sold out their goods at low prices and left Beijing in May 1737.⁶⁴ Similar treatment was accorded to the government caravan headed by Gerasim Lebratovsky, which arrived in Beijing in November 1745 and stayed until the following November.

The 16th Russian government caravan was sent to Beijing in 1758. It proved to be the last, for in 1762 the state's monopoly on the China trade was officially abolished. Since no more caravans were sent, Russo-Chinese trade was concentrated on the border, chiefly at Kiachta, where private commerce had been shifted to from Urga under a 1727 treaty.

Construction of a trading station on the Kiachta river four *versts* from Troitsky (Trinity) Fort, so named because its first stone was laid on Trinity Sunday in 1727, began soon after the signing of the Kiachta Tract. It arose on a site selected on the instructions of envoy Vladislavich-Raguzinsky to Captain F. Kniaginkin of 30 June 1728. By the end of September 1728, twenty-nine log huts (out of the envisaged 32) and a caravanserai of 16 *sazhens*, with 24 shops and storerooms, had been built, with the first market-day held on 25 August in which ten Russian and four Chinese merchants took part. Between 1 October 1729 and 1 January 1730 as many as 453 people with 630 packhorses and two camels were registered as having passed Troitsky Fort (Troitskosavsk) to the Kiachta trading station.⁶⁵ In 1729, 112.97 roubles were collected there for billets (at 30 kopecks per person per month), and 232.17 roubles the following year, serving as indirect evidence of the rising border trade.

In 1730, construction began of a Chinese trading station on Mongol territory opposite Kiachta, which came to be known as Maimaicheng (trade post). At the outset, it was inhabited by Shanxi people known in China as traders and money-lenders. Judging from the partially extant inscription on a bell made in the 8th year of the reign of Qian Lung (1743) for the Chinese joss house in Maimaicheng, they had come from Fenyang county, Fenzhou prefecture, Shanxi province. As traders and natives of one county, they belonged to one guild.

Though following the first market in August 1728, the Chinese merchants had complained in an official letter to Kniaginkin that the Russian traders had been too few and that all they had offered for barter was cloth and leather (with sale of horses, oxen, and sheep having been temporarily forbidden owing to wintertime

distemper), their subsequent contacts convinced them of the advantages of the Kiachta market, with the Russians bringing much more goods to the border than the Chinese. In 1736-1740, Russian goods brought to Kiachta averaged an annual 1,430 carts and 96 sledges, whereas Chinese goods, judging from their transports out of Kiachta to inland Russia amounted to 806 cartloads and 37 sledges.⁶⁶ In the next five years (1741-1745), the ratio was still in favour of the Russians (1,200 carts arriving in Kiachta with Russian goods and 944 leaving Kiachta with Chinese goods for Siberia and the European part of Russia). From 1741 on, the Russian border administration despatched through this point the diplomatic mail to Beijing and official packages for members of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission.

The advantages of the Kiachta market were obvious. In 1744, for example, the Chinese bartered 287,500 roubles worth of goods there, whereas in the 1730s the official caravans had never carried goods worth more than 100,000 roubles, and often returned with a loss. Legal border trade was also carried on at Tsuruhaitui (on the right bank of the Argun 300 km from Nerchinsk), where private trading (by Russian merchants) had been moved from Tsitsihar under the 1727 treaty.

From 1772 on, however, Kiachta was the sole point of legal Russian trading with China. Despite a two-year interruption (1778 and 1779), the turnover increased 170 per cent from 1769 to 1784. Furs still topped the list of Russian exports, accounting for 78.8 per cent of total trade. The list of Chinese goods bartered in Kiachta was topped by cotton textiles. Between 1775 and 1781 (excepting 1778 and 1779), in fact, textiles (which also included a small quantity of woollens) amounted to 63 per cent of China's exports to Russia.

In 1760, the revenue taken in at Kiachta added up to 20.4 per cent of all customs duties collected by the Russian treasury, and in 1775 to as much as 38.5 per cent. This stake in the China trade, among other things, spurred the Russian government to seek good-neighbourly relations with the Dragon Throne.

The Qing, on the other hand, obstructed any expansion of commerce between Russian and Chinese merchants. Time and again, seizing on minor violations of border regulations, local Manchu authorities banned trading at Kiachta. According to data found in Russian archives, the Qing border authorities stopped Russo-Chinese trading at this point on ten occasions, namely, for 17 days in 1744, two days in 1747, one day in 1751, five months and three days in 1753, one month and seven days in 1756, eleven days in 1759, six years in 1762, three days in 1775, two years and 13 days in 1778, and seven years in 1785.⁶⁷ These acts of the Manchu court did grave damage to mutually advantageous trade, and indeed impaired the chances for closer political and cultural contacts between the peoples of Russia, China, and Mongolia.

Chapter 2

THE QING EMPIRE BEFORE THE WESTERN CAPITALIST POWERS CAME IN (from the 1790s to the 1840s)

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries the feudal economic and political system in the Qing Empire showed symptoms of decay. This was seen in the decline of treasury-sponsored production and in the growth of large private enterprise, in the continuing specialisation of urban handicrafts and expanding production of marketable commodities, and in the ever greater prominence of commercial and industrial capital.

In the countryside, feudalism was also obviously in decay. Landed property was concentrated in the hands of Manchu and, especially, Chinese gentry families; land hunger and ruin bedevilled the mass of the peasants, reducing them to the abject state of share-croppers. On the farms of the more prosperous peasants employment of wage labour became relatively widespread.

The Spread of Wage Labour in the Countryside

In the latter half of the 18th and in the early 19th centuries the most typical development in the Qing system of land property was the spectacular growth of imperial estates. In 1758, there were slightly more than 700 such estates in Manchuria and North China with a total area of 13,000 *qing* (1 *qing*=15.18 acres—*Tr.*). By 1812 their number grew to 1,078 with an area of 35,000 *qing*.¹ This expansion of imperial holdings came about chiefly through the tilling of previously uncultivated state land and confiscation of the holdings of insolvent bannermen.

Some wealthy Manchu families greatly expanded their estates by devouring bannermen's allotments and the land of Chinese peasants, and by appropriating public land (waste land and pastures, and the like). In 1799, a court favourite by name of Heshen had thus seized more than 800,000 *mu*, and another Manchu dignitary, Qi Shan,

as much as 2,500,000 *mu*.²

The acquisition of small peasant holdings by the wealthy gentry continued. A Chinese official's memorial to the governor of Guangxi in 1780 said, among other things, that most of the peasant land in the province had fallen into the hands of the rich; landed estates bought for money by private persons, mostly of the upper feudal bureaucratic echelon, had grown to staggering size; Bai Ling, the governor of Guangdong, for example, had bought up land piece by piece until he had more than 500,000 *mu*.³

The concentration of land in the hands of the feudal gentry saw the price of land go up spectacularly. In the 1730s one *mu* (of average fertility) had cost seven to eight *liang* of silver, more than 20 *liang* in the 1740s, and as much as 50 to 60 *liang* by the mid-1780.⁴ N.I. Liubimov, who was in Beijing in 1840-1841 on business of the Ecclesiastical Mission, wrote to St Petersburg that the price of land in China was rising continuously, and that land in the vicinity of the capital had gone up 450 per cent since 1735.⁵ The high price of land was indirect evidence of acute land hunger. But peasants sold their tiny plots far below the market price.

By the mid-19th century most of the cultivated land in the country had fallen into the possession of Manchu and Chinese feudal gentry families. In Shanxi, Hubei, and Jiangsu there were estates of several hundred thousand *mu* each, and a few of more than a million *mu*. The land hunger was especially acute in the southern provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi. In return for a strip of land for their starving family or the equivalent in silver landless peasants driven to despair volunteered for execution in place of condemned landlords, sentenced to death for grave crimes.

The disintegration of the old forms of landownership and the growth of private landed estates paved the way for capitalism in agriculture. But with the land rent usually amounting to as much as half the harvest, compounded with other forms of compulsion, the Chinese landlords preferred to let landless peasants rent small plots rather than have their land worked by wage labourers.

Share-cropping was the most widespread landlord-peasant relationship, with the tenant surrendering half his crop to the owner of the land. It predominated in the interior and in the maritime provinces, though here commodity-money relations and cash cropping were widespread. Share-cropping was practised in crop farming and in other fields of husbandry. In Shandong, tenant silkworm breeders gave away half the cocoon harvest to owners of oak groves. Another feature: in addition to the land-hungry, share-cropping was practised by prosperous peasants, who employed wage and seasonal labour. Frequently, tenants were obliged to seek the landlord's 'advice' before deciding what they would plant. In Zhili province, for

example, the landowner's 'advice' was mandatory before planting spring or winter crops.⁶ The share-croppers' position was unstable. After the harvesting, the landlord could deny tenancy in the following year. The fear of losing their plot compelled share-croppers to suffer the carping and the whims of the landlord, which made them more and more dependent as the years went by.

Fixed rent in kind was an important element in the system of land letting. The size of the rent depended on the fertility of the plot, and when the lease was sealed (either orally or, in some cases, in writing) the tenant farmer deposited security in cash, all or part of which the landlord would (under the terms of the contract) appropriate if the tenant defaulted. Any large deposit naturally had an adverse effect on the tenant's ability to run his farm, and most land leased on these terms usually fell into the hands of the more prosperous farmers.

Sometimes, the landowner accepted cash in place of the fixed amount of grain. But this was evidently infrequent, and only when profitable or desirable to the owner. In Zhili province, where the fixed rate was in excess of 30 and sometimes 40 per cent of the maximum yield, payment in cash was allowed to land-hungry tenants who had barely enough grain to feed their families.

Rent in cash was more widespread in the lower and middle reaches of the Yangzi and in the maritime provinces, and this chiefly for industrial crops, with the amount depending on the quality and location of the plot. In the early 1850s in the vicinity of Beijing, for example, the tenant paid 1,500 to 2,000 *wen* per *mu* a year, or approximately 3 to 6 per cent of the value of the land for an even field of predominantly loess soil (wheat field).⁷ The tenant paid the rent a year in advance, which compelled him to resort to the services of money-lenders.

In some parts of the maritime provinces rent in cash was practised under long-term as well as short-term contracts. In the prefecture of Shuntian of Zhili province, the term of tenure ranged from three to five years for landless and poor peasants, and from three to fifteen years for prosperous tenants. When concluding the contract, the tenant paid the rent a year in advance and, in addition, made a cash deposit. Long-term land lease was preferred mainly by peasants who had large sums of money. They rented land from ruined peasants and wealthy landlords alike. In both cases, the size of the rent depended on the duration of the lease—the longer it was the less was paid per unit of area per annum.

Frequently, prosperous peasants and village rich who leased land from wealthy landlords, sub-leased it in strips to the poor. There were two types of sub-tenancy: contractual lease with the subsequent transfer of all land to lesser tenants or lease with the transfer

to other tenants of just part of the land. This was profitable for the village rich, who exacted a far higher annual payment from the sub-tenant than what they paid to the landlord.

Though Qing law granted tenants equal rights with landlords, the status of the former was really far from equal. For one thing, the gentry was allowed to pay a ransom to escape corporal punishment. The tenant's position was also inferior in most other matters. If he failed to show the reverence due to the landlord, as prescribed for the younger towards the elder, he was punished with 50 strokes of a bamboo pole irrespective of his age.⁸

The landlord's right to receive rent was protected by law. A tenant who 'deliberately' delayed payment was punished with 80 strokes, with the overdue amount of grain or money payable immediately. Though the Qing court fixed the scale of punishments for defaults in rent, it permitted the landlords to set the punishment within that scale as they saw fit. Though the law formally provided for a reduction of rent in the event of a natural calamity, this rule was hardly ever observed. Besides, landlords often increased the burden on the tenant by introducing auxiliary levies. It was common practice to cheat peasants when weighing their rent in kind. This was facilitated by the fact that in addition to the official system of weights and measures there were local measures in each county, prefecture, and province.

Commercialisation and the expansion of market relationships at the end of the 18th and in the early 19th centuries encouraged growth of rural handicrafts. In the 1830s, in the Suzhou-Songjiang area of Jiangsu province, for example, at least five households out of every ten engaged in the manufacture of cotton fabrics. And though the manufacture of silk fabrics in the cities had relegated village weaving to the background, there was hand-reeling of cocoons and twisting of silk threads. The master of a French ship, one Montfort, who visited the silk districts in the lower and middle reaches of the Yangzi in 1845, said he saw very few silk weavers in rural areas.⁹

In some districts, the growth of handicrafts in the 1840s led to the emergence of village manufactories. In the village of Lijiazhuang (Zichuan county of Shandong province), for example, there was a 20-loom enterprise, while in Guangdong province village sugar refineries were fairly widespread.

Owing to the brutal exploitation by landlords and money-lenders, handicrafts were for many peasants all but the sole means of subsistence. In 1831, agents of the English East India Company reporting on the reaction of the Chinese peasantry to imports of cotton yarn said the peasants of the two counties nearest to Guangzhou (Canton) declared they would burn the overseas yarn if it was delivered to their villages. This was because the introduction of foreign yarn

deprived them of the so essential earnings additional to their meagre budget.¹⁰

In the maritime provinces wage labour was the most widespread, for there commercial farming had reached a relatively high level. According to writer Bao Shichen, in 1829 tobacco growing in Jining county of Shandong province was monopolised by six families, who employed more than 4,000 labourers.

Seasonal peasant migration was also gaining in scale alongside wage labour, with the village poor seeking earnings in neighbouring districts, sometimes as organised work gangs.

By the 19th century, wage labour was extensively employed in the households of prosperous peasants. In 1788, the Qing government recognised the formal equality of hired labourers and their employers, provided these were 'peasant tenants'.¹¹ There is evidence that the bulk of the latter were prosperous peasants who leased land from the feudal gentry and from ruined peasants to grow profitable cash crops, such as cotton, indigo, tobacco, wheat, and so on. An 1801 edict encouraged the further spread of wage labour. A passage in an 1823 publication, *Yichun xianzhi* (Description of Yichun county), said: 'Previously, labourers were hired chiefly from among vagabonds, while now they are hired from among local people'.¹² And that was true of many other counties in the maritime provinces. The stratification of village society led to the emergence from out of the heterogeneous peasant mass of a small section of rich and prosperous peasants who regularly employed wage labour, on the one hand, and of a definite contingent of village poor who were forced to sell their labour power.

Hire of day labourers and seasonal workers was practised by the bulk of small landlords and prosperous peasants, who had a stake in the fullest possible and effective use of labour power during the sowing and harvesting. Remuneration was based on the work time and, much more frequently, on the amount of work done (especially in harvesting). Tea-leaf pickers in the Ningbo area, Zhejiang province, were paid 4 or 5 *wen* for each 600 grammes of leaf. To stimulate labour, the employers sometimes agreed to pay the labourer a lump sum for a certain portion of work. An additional allowance was paid for urgent work. But the wage of women and children, employed extensively on short-term hire terms, was usually much lower than that of males.

Farm labourers were generally hired by big landlords and village rich growing tobacco, cotton, sugar cane, and other industrial crops. Labourers were also employed on big farms in the vicinity of cities, growing vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Wages depended on the nature of the work and the skill of the labourer. Furthermore, on big farms labourers were paid more than on smaller ones.

Along with seasonal migration of labourers there was a certain amount of migration by landless and poor peasants to manufacturing and mining areas. In his description of coal mining in Mentougou near Beijing, where he sought an explanation for the labour fluidity in the area, one A.I. Kovanko (a student at the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing from 1830 to 1836), wrote: 'The number of labourers changes very often, because only a few sign up for permanent work, while the bulk make their appearance only when they are free from farm work'.¹³

The spread of wage labour, and especially the migration of seasonal labourers from the villages, was clear evidence of new social developments in the Chinese countryside. It showed that the immediate peasant producers were being gradually estranged from the means of production. Owing to the relatively small scale of marketable production in the country as a whole, however, the process was extremely slow. The emergence of farms and enterprises employing wage labour was still slower. Failing to find work, a substantial portion of expropriated peasants were compelled to again lease land from the gentry on exorbitant terms.

Growth of Urban Crafts and Private Manufactories

In the 18th century, the expansion of internal commerce and of trade with other countries encouraged the growth of handicrafts in China proper and the ethnic outlands.

The biggest silk manufacturing centres at the turn of the 19th century were Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou. In Nanjing and its environs, for example, there were as many as 30,000 looms making satin alone. In addition, silk was manufactured in the cities of Huzhou, Shaoxing, Ningbo, Shengzezhen, and Jiaying. The chief cotton manufacturing centres in the middle reaches of the Yangzi were Shanghai, Suzhou, Songjiang, and Nanjing, and in the South—Guangzhou. By 1853 the number of satin looms in Nanjing had risen to 35,000, with 15,000 more in its environs.¹⁴ Until the 1840s, the cotton industry in Guangdong province annually consumed up to 830,000 bales of yarn, out of which some 330,000 were shipped in from abroad. Citing these figures and estimating the number of cotton weavers at 5 million, one Haussman, a French trading expert who visited the southern and central areas of China in 1844-1846, observed that yarn imports from abroad via Guangzhou had doubled in twenty years.¹⁵

Mining continued to expand steadily in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. With progress in smelting techniques, new iron ore mines were developed in Shenxi (Hanzhong area), Shanxi (Taiyuan

area), Jiangxi, and other provinces. Coal mining expanded considerably, especially in Zhili province, where at least ten large mines were registered in and around Mentougou in 1843.¹⁶ The biggest copper mines were in Yunnan province, including those at Tangdan, Lulu, Dashui, Maolu, Shizishan, and Dagong, which employed some 60,000 to 70,000 miners each.¹⁷

Foshanzhen was still the major iron-making centre, which visiting Englishmen, impressed by the number of foundries, smithies, and other workshops, called the Chinese Birmingham. Another important centre was Hankou where, according to Bao Shichen, there were more than 5,000 artisans engaged in metalworking in 1798.

Much metal was produced in the southern part of Shenxi province, where private enterprises manufactured farm tools. The process consisted, as a rule, of four operations: extraction of iron ore, the making of charcoal, the smelting of metal, and the manufacture of tools in smithies. In 1824, there were two such enterprises in Dingyuan county, five in Lueyang county, and 17 in Fengxian county. The smaller enterprises had three or four furnaces, the bigger ones six or seven. The work force ranged from a hundred to several thousand men.

Rock-salt workings continued to grow. Sichuan province alone had over 8,600 wells and over 5,000 cauldrons in 1814.¹⁸ The biggest salterns were in Ziliujin and Gongjin. Salt was also obtained by evaporation from seawater, especially in the area of Tianjin and the Huaihe delta.

Paper manufacture was concentrated chiefly in Suzhou, Nanjing, and Beijing. By the 19th century, it also spread to the southern part of Shenxi province. In 1822, more than twenty paper mills were operating in Huayanzhen (Yangxian county), and more than 120 in the counties of Xixiang and Dingyuan. In 1824, more than a hundred similar enterprises were active in three other counties—those of Qishan, Zhuangping, and Ankang.¹⁹ Paper was in high demand for printing and domestic use. Wall paper was produced in Beijing, for example, with adornments painted on directly by artists or printed with carved wooden boards.

A woodworking industry was rising in the southern part of Shenxi. In the 1820s, five counties there had more than 70 private enterprises dealing in logs, beams, firewood, and so on. The biggest of them (making round timber) employed between 3,000 and 5,000 labourers. Their owners lived mainly in cities (Xian, Hanzhong, etc.), leaving their managers to run the works.

One of the chief centres of porcelain manufacture was Jingdezhen, where there were several thousand private workshops.²⁰ Its sole rivals were the cities of Dehua in Fujian province and Longquan in Zhejiang province. Large lots of china were shipped by Chinese merchants to countries in South-East Asia.

In the 1840s, Guangzhou had over a hundred private workshops and manufactories making glassware. The development of glass-making in Beijing led to the gradual replacement of copper mirrors (with surface highly polished or covered with a film of mercury), and by the mid-19th century they became a rarity.

The traditional Chinese arts and crafts expanded continuously—carving on ivory, wood, and stone, and the making of lacquer ware, fans, lanterns, and the like. Ivory carvers used imported material, and French experts testify that annual shipments of ivory to Guangzhou in the 1840s amounted to 60-70 tonnes, with one-third of this amount coming from Siam and the rest from Bombay, India.²¹ Chinese artifacts were popular in the country and far outside its borders.

The most salient feature was the steady commercialisation of what had been small-scale urban handicrafts. The production of cheap fabrics in the highest demand went up steadily, while the output of expensive fabrics, for a smaller circle of consumers, went down. But owing to the prevalence of subsistence farming the growth of small-scale urban handicrafts into larger-scale commercial manufacture was extremely slow and ununiform. In some fields, such as the manufacture of silk, it gained predominance, while in others artisans produced mainly made-to-order custom articles.

Commercialisation was accompanied by increasing differentiation within the guilds, with many hundreds of artisans being ruined and turned into wage workers, while the richer craftsmen and shopkeepers acquired large workshops and manufactories. In the 1820s and 1840s in Nanjing, private silk manufactories had 400 to 600 looms each,²² and in addition their owners farmed out piece work to home workers.

In 1833, there were as many as 2,500 small-scale workshops and manufactories making cotton fabrics in Guangzhou, employing 50,000 workers or, on average, 20 at each enterprise.²³ In the 1840s, there were also several cotton-printing manufactories, each employing some 50 workers. But in the early half of the 19th century, the making of cotton fabrics was still an auxiliary peasant industry which supplied both the domestic and external market.

There were large private enterprises in the iron-making industry, in coal-mining, and in salt-making. The French missionary Anbert, who visited Ziliujin in 1827, noted that some private entrepreneurs were working up to a hundred salt wells.²⁴

Private enterprise was also coming into the manufacture of porcelain, glass, building materials, and even into the arts. There was a private manufactory on Henan island in Guangzhou where 20 people were employed making porcelain tea bowls. A fairly large private brick factory in Liulitun (west of Beijing) had five kilns, each

for 150,000 to 200,000 bricks.²⁵ Clay bricks used in housebuilding were shaped in partitioned wooden moulds, a relatively efficient method. By means of this mould a labourer could shape some 1,100 bricks daily for baking.

Large private enterprises were processing tea leaves, sugar cane, other crops. The biggest tea processing factories in Guangzhou were on Henan island. A British naturalist, Robert Fortune, who visited one housed in two-storey buildings, saw several hundred women and children sorting leaves. Some 500 men, women, and children are known to have been employed in a private tea manufactory near Guangzhou dating to the 1840s.²⁶

With grain production rising, manufacturing methods made headway in flour-milling and wine-making. During his stay in Guangzhou in 1845, the Frenchman Haussman visited a private flour mill where he saw 40 millstones working at one time. One such millstone, turned by a buffalo, milled more than 45 kilogrammes of flour daily. Every five millstones were operated by one worker.

The large enterprises were in many cases founded on merchants' share capital, such as the coal-mines in Mentougou, the salterns in Sichuan province, and so on.

Alongside manufactories of a centralised type, there was another, still more widespread, form of large-scale production, that of home work. Paper flowers, for example, which were in high demand in Beijing, were usually made by teams of craftsmen, each labourer doing one of the operations involved—some making petals, others shaping separate parts of the flower, and some putting them together. The work was performed for a merchant entrepreneur, who paid for it piece by piece.

While private manufacturing was slowly expanding, treasury-controlled artisan industries were going into decline. Stagnation was setting in at the more important government enterprises. The numbers of government-bound craftsmen and artisans was decreasing as they were gradually replaced by wage labourers. Treasury enterprises were in some ways becoming dependent on private ones. One example: in the 1840s crucibles used in Beijing mints to melt copper were purchased at high prices from private persons. Among the reasons for the decline of treasury-run crafts (and manufacturing) was the greater commercialisation of commodity production, the scarcity of funds in the imperial coffers, and the corruption that pervaded the bureaucratic apparatus.

Most wage labourers at large private enterprises were ruined peasants from different provinces. A local official in the southern part of Shenxi province, where there were many iron, woodworking, and paper mills, one Yan Ruyi, wrote in 1805: 'In the district at the junction of Shenxi and Sichuan provinces, native people comprise

less than 10-20 per cent, people from Hubei 50 per cent, and natives of the provinces of Guangdong, Anhui, and Jiangxi approximately 30-40 per cent.' While recommending closer control over the population in the district, Yan Ruyi observed that 'if the establishments [private] were closed, the people working in them would be deprived of a source of livelihood, and the number of tramps would increase by several hundred thousand'.²⁷

At private enterprises working hours usually depended on the natural length of the day, though in winter work continued round the clock. There were practically no rest days or holidays.

In long-term hire (usually a year) time rates predominated. According to foreign observers, workers of a porcelain manufactory (on Henan island) received wages ranging from 60 to 110 piastres a year, depending on their job. Foremen were paid 140 piastres.²⁸ At some enterprises, however, piece rates were in wide use, often depending on the quality of the product, its size, and the like.

In short-term hire (seasonal or day work), as a rule, labourers were paid piece rates. Labourers at Mentougou who carried coal from pit to surface, for example, were paid 200 *wen* for each 100 *jin* of coal. A porter could earn 1,000 *wen* daily. Wages were usually paid in cash and in kind, with the latter sometimes amounting to more than one-third of the earnings. Capitalising on the surplus of manpower, owners of private workshops and manufactories set onerous terms and provided oppressive working conditions. Manufacturers, especially those who operated small enterprises, preferred hiring people of their own province or county. This was partly because people of different provinces, prefectures, even counties, spoke different dialects and had different customs. Furthermore, hiring their countrymen, the manufacturers had some assurance that the 'secrets' of their enterprise would not be betrayed.

Corporative influences were especially strong in the system of wages. Among other things, craftsmen were paid high wages, while semi-skilled and, notably, unskilled workers made do with very little. The way of life and the mentality of wage labourers were governed by guild traditions, among them initiation rites, and rituals honouring patrons of the various trades.

Most private enterprises employed primitive manual techniques. Any technical innovation entailing redundancy of labourers was inevitably opposed by the labour force, which feared losing its livelihood.*

* The life of an inventor who had set up a mechanical winch and a pump at one of the Mentougou coalmines was threatened by the labourers, who tore down the winch and destroyed the pump. The innovation would have replaced several dozen workers. (See E. Kovalevsky, *Puteshestviye v Kitai*, Part 1, St Petersburg, 1853, p. 136.)

Despite the strong guild influences, private manufacturing was bringing in new relations of production. A serious obstacle, however, were the abuses practised by the feudal authorities. Not only did they limit the activity of private entrepreneurs, but also sought to place wage labourers under rigid control by means of the mutual responsibility (*baojia*) system.

Towards the close of the 18th and in the early half of the 19th century large-scale private enterprises akin in structure to capitalist manufactories were, as we see, rising in the more developed industries in the maritime provinces and some inland regions. But owing to the prevalence of barter and of subsistence farming their growth was very slow. The share that the output of private manufactories constituted in the aggregate mass of commodities was therefore still insignificant.

The bulk of the private manufactories working for the market were small workshops or enterprises. Their technical standard was low, and division of labour was next to non-existent in them. Owing to their small size, the work force they employed was not numerous, meaning that the degree of concentration of labour-power was low. Furthermore, the law of the medieval guilds still ruled supreme.

Inland Commerce and Growth of Merchant Capital

Manufacturing stimulated growth of commerce within China proper and in its outlands. Commercialisation produced lasting trade ties between different parts of the country through stable regional markets. Specialisation of manufacturing led to specialisation of markets. Silk yarn was an object of lively trade in Nanjing, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Hankou. Shanghai, Nanjing, Songjiang, and Guangzhou were centres of the cotton trade. Suzhou, Wuhu, and Shanhaiguan were renowned for their dyes, and had dye markets. Porcelain and ceramics were made and sold in Jingdezhen, Nanchang, Zhengzhou (on the Grand Canal), as well as in Zhanzhou and Shima (in Fujian province). Woollen goods were to be had in Lanzhou and Ningxia, while Xuanhua in the north-west of Zhili province (bordering on the land of Mongol nomads) traded briskly in felt goods. Jilin in Manchuria was the major centre of the trade in furs, some being shipped to Korea in exchange for writing paper.

The bulk of the goods shipped from South to North were produced by peasant craftsmen and urban artisans. Only a fraction consisted of commodities made in city or village manufactories. Goods flowing from North to South were chiefly foodstuffs and industrial farm produce. This specialisation may be traced to the different economic levels of the southern and northern provinces.

At the turn of the 19th century, coastwise trade made visible advances. Hundreds of junks from Amoy, Zhapu, Tianjin, and other ports sailed to Fuzhou for timber floated from the upper reaches of the Minjiang. The biggest coastal trade centre was Shanghai. Often, a thousand and more large junks were anchored in its harbour at one time. With maritime restrictions lifted, fisheries grew intensively, especially in the Zhoushan islands area. Tens of thousands of fishing junks headed there every summer from Zhejiang, Jiangsu, even Fujian provinces. In the 1840s, at least 35,000 junks were engaged in fishery there, with an average crew of five to each junk. Fresh, salted and dry-cured fish was transported inland in large quantities from Zhapu and other seaports.

Internal trade also expanded through the closer commercial ties that formed between the Chinese provinces and the ethnic outlands—Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and other areas. They supplied China proper chiefly with animal products.

Annual fairs tended to boost commerce significantly. Held chiefly in the big cities or their environs, they sometimes lasted for several weeks. The fairs in Beijing opened at the beginning of every Chinese lunar new year holiday. In addition to annual fairs, large bazaars of local and shipped in goods were held on certain days of the month in the courtyards of large temples. Besides, Beijing had some specialised daily markets.²⁹

The expansion of internal trade spurred growth of cities and of urban populations. According to 1812 figures, there were over 1,460 cities in the provinces of China proper, excluding the six counties of the Chengde prefecture (in the North-East) and a few districts in the South-West peopled by ethnic minorities.³⁰ The biggest of all was the city of Beijing, to which commodities flowed from all parts of the country. In 1849, the imperial capital, along with its suburbs, had a population of nearly 3 million, and according to the Office of Taxes, in 1835 the population of the 18 provinces of China proper numbered over 400 million.

The number of people engaged in trade and the crafts grew rapidly in the port cities of East and South China. Ningbo's population of 400,000 consisted four-fifths of artisans, tradesmen, and wage labourers. In the suburbs and the city's environs some 10 per cent were boatmen and fishermen, three-tenths artisans, and six-tenths tillers.³¹ The high percentage of tradesmen and artisans was also typical of other cities on the coast and in the lower and middle reaches of the Yangzi.

With commodity production growing apace in the maritime provinces and spreading to areas fairly remote from the major manufacturing centres, the role of merchant capital increased still more. Large specialised trade enterprises made their appearance, engaging

almost exclusively in wholesale commerce.

An important place in the country's economy belonged to merchant middlemen, especially the big wholesalers, who supplied the more remote markets. They took advantage of their exclusive position to buy up farm produce and the products of village craftsmen at low prices, frequently exchanging ready goods brought to urban and rural markets by peasants from neighbouring villages for raw materials. This payment in kind spurred the growth of merchant capital in the countryside. From there it was a short step to large-scale production in dispersed manufactories, with small-scale independent producers gradually becoming wage labourers. Some writers date this process in most industries to the latter half of the 19th century. But the rudimentary forms of capitalist production—home work for an employer—had appeared much earlier. There is clear evidence that capitalist home work had existed in the early 19th century, as in the case of tallow candles manufactured in Beijing. The wicks were braided by people of neighbouring villages, chiefly women, who were paid 20 *wen* for every hundred wicks (the material was provided by the employer). Home work was most widely practised in cities. There were agencies in Beijing that distributed sacking to women and had them sew sacks.³²

Towards the end of the 18th century merchant capital began playing a more and more conspicuous part in finance and credit. Private banking offices (*piaohao*) sprang up, which accepted deposits, issued loans, and handled remittances. As a rule established on share capital, they had branch offices in different parts of the country. Most of them belonged to the powerful Shanxi merchants, who had close connections with the authorities. Originally, the banks serviced chiefly traders, but later also enlisted a clientele among bureaucrats. Those appointed to especially lucrative posts paid the highest interest.

In addition to banking offices, there were also money-changers and pawnshops. The richest of these (*qianzhuang* and *zihao*) accepted deposits and issued loans, exchanged and remitted money, and also issued their own paper money and promissory notes. Their paper money was widely circulated in northern, as well as southern provinces, and it is on record that townsmen, particularly artisans and traders, seemed to prefer it to copper coins. But the notes were circulated in a limited area, usually within the bounds of a city, district, or neighbourhood. * Promissory notes (*yingpiao* and *zhuang-*

* According to F. T. Kiselevsky, member of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing (from 1830 to 1840), a money-lender or owner of a loan-bank clipped the banknotes out of a special ledger, keeping a 'counterfoil' with part of the seal and the signatures. When a banknote was being redeemed he found the appropriate page of the ledger, and counter-checked the seals and signatures before paying out the money. (See GBL, f. 273, box 23, unit 8.)

piao) were a more convenient medium for settling accounts. Issued for any desired sum, they could be redeemed at money-changers' offices or wherever they were issued, and in districts that had bank branches. They were in wide use in the lower reaches of the Yangzi and in some of the south-eastern maritime provinces. Promissory notes and paper money were also issued by owners of large commercial houses and shops. In Jiangsu province, wholesalers' agents paid peasants for their homespun cotton in promissory notes redeemable from some large local commercial establishment.

In the early 19th century, the number of loan-banks increased visibly. Not counting the many small unlicensed pawnshops kept by money-lenders, there were 830 loan-banks in Guangzhou in 1833.³³ The bigger loan-banks where valuables and other articles could be pawned for terms of one to three years, usually charged a monthly interest of 2 or 3 per cent. At smaller pawnshops the rate was much higher. In the 1840s at Beijing, they charged 6 to 8 per cent, and at Guangzhou 10 to 15 per cent. There were also pawnshops in the large villages to which peasants flocked from the vicinity to sell farm produce and handicrafts.

High-ranking members of the Qing bureaucracy had close ties with merchant usurers. They made large sums of money available for loans, and were themselves owners of money-changing offices, loan-banks, and pawnshops. In 1799, the prominent Manchu dignitary Heshen owned 42 money-changing offices and 75 loan-banks with total assets of 70 million *liang*.³⁴ Many top dignitaries who received huge bribes or appropriated large portions of various unlawful levies, often kept their fortunes with the Shanxi bankers, collecting sizeable interest. In Guangzhou, for example, the interest paid for long-term deposits was as high as 12 per cent.

The Qing government, too, engaged in money-lending. It issued considerable sums to merchants at low interest to the advantage of the treasury. In 1832, the Guangdong and Guangxi treasury lent merchants 100,000 *liang* of silver to obtain additional funds for the suppression of peasant revolts in Guangxi.³⁵ Though extracting considerable revenue in taxes from money-changers, loan-banks, and pawnbrokers, the Qing sought to regulate the activity of merchant usury capital, especially in Beijing. An 1825 edict required those who owned, or intended to open, money-changing offices in Beijing to have five guarantors owning similar establishments.

Despite the growing power of merchant capital, retail trade predominated in most towns and villages of the empire, some of it on an extremely small scale. Petty trade, including street peddling, was as a rule exempt from any taxes, and served as a last resort for the vast mass of dislocated, starving and unemployed people. Peddling chiefly concerned farm products (grain, cotton, raw silk, tea, and

tobacco), while metal and wood articles, porcelain, and so on, accounted for only an insignificant share of the turnover.

Owing to a shortage of capital, wholesale trade reposed as a rule on share-capital. In many cases, managers, who received a miserly salary from the shareholders, were allowed to deal within specified limits in their own line of goods.

The growth of private trading was hampered by the feudal system of patents that gave a limited circle of merchants a monopoly on specific goods. By keeping prices high, the patent holders ruthlessly suppressed the private initiative not only of prosperous peasants, but also of medium and small traders. Patented middlemen (*jingji* and *yahang*), who were officially authorised to regulate market prices, also exerted a negative effect on private commerce. They were usually influential merchants who paid special sums into the treasury for patents from local authorities. They took charge of the goods of visiting merchants, and assumed responsibility for the timely settlement of accounts by local buyers. The patents issued by the treasury entitled them to a commission for their services. In the southern parts of Manchuria, for example, tobacco-growers paid middlemen a commission of 10 per cent of the value of the goods sold, and the visiting merchants who bought the goods paid 20 per cent. The middlemen could be individuals or they could be guilds closely connected with the local officialdom.

The rigid control exercised by the middlemen was compounded with burdensome customs duties. Internal trade was also afflicted by the fact that most merchant princes and wealthy government dignitaries converted their capital into treasure or real estate (houses, land, and the like).

In the 1820s, the patents system began to decline, especially in the salt trade. By the 1830s the revenue from patent-holders (in Liang-huai, for example) had fallen so low that in 1831 the Qing government altogether abolished patents in the region.³⁶ One of the reasons why the system degenerated was that private capital was forging ahead in the sphere of production. The independent peasant salterns failed. Salt production was concentrated in the hands of merchants who bought peasant land for next to nothing. There was much contraband trading; it had been spreading since the late 18th century. Coupled with corruption, with officials selling government salt to private traders for a bribe, the commodity became less than lucrative by the mid-19th century, and patented merchants began refusing to handle it.

Merchants who had tea patents were better off. But, like the salt merchants, they had to contend with the oppressive feudalistic regulations and with official abuses.

Changes in the Structure of Foreign Trade

Despite the difficulties created for Chinese and foreign merchants by the Dragon Throne, China's trade with other Asian and with European countries continued to expand.

Chinese merchants had a lively overland trade with Korea, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. The barter with Korea was conducted through the Chinese border towns of Fenghuang (on the Yalu) and Hunchun (on the Tumen). The trading with Burma, Laos, and Vietnam was also based on barter. Handicrafts, chiefly fabrics, predominated among the Chinese exports. Chinese merchants sent their goods abroad not only overland, but also by sea. Junks shipped silk and cotton goods, porcelain, sugar, and other commodities to Japan in exchange for copper, lacquer ware, salted fish, and seaweeds. Much business was done with countries in South-East Asia. From 70 to 100 junks of both countries were engaged in commerce with Siam, where there was a large number of Chinese settlers. Ties with Singapore, which was a major centre of Chinese immigration, grew strong in the 1830s. In 1830 the port of Singapore was visited by nine Chinese junks, and by 18 junks the following year.³⁷ In time trade with Singapore expanded so greatly that it eclipsed trade with neighbouring Batavia.

Towards the end of the 18th century commerce with the West European countries and the United States of America grew visibly, and continued to grow in the first thirty years of the 19th century. Between 1795 and 1833 the over-all turnover through Guangzhou increased 63 per cent. In 1830-1833, Britain, which was in the lead, accounted for 79.8 per cent of Chinese exports and 74 of imports.

Britain's China trade was monopolised by the English East India Company. It held the monopoly until 1834. In 1795-1796 it accounted for 58 per cent of all British trading with China through Guangzhou.³⁸ No small place belonged to British and Indian merchants who traded in Guangzhou with the permission of the East India Company. British traders shipped in chiefly woollen goods, Indian cotton, metals (tin, lead, and copper) and modest lots of finished metal articles. The above-listed items accounted for 70 to 80 per cent of the value of Anglo-Indian shipments to Guangzhou, with cotton heading the list until opium began to take precedence.

Tea was the major item in the list of British shipments from China. A powerful impulse was given to the tea trade in 1784, when the British government lowered the tea duty from 119 to 12.5 per cent. The following year tea shipments from Guangzhou rose from 4 million pounds sterling in 1783 to 10.5 million pounds sterling, and climbed to the impressive sum of 20.7 million by 1794. Towards the close of the 1830s, the British tea trade nearly doubled to the sum

of 40.2 million pounds.³⁹ In 1830-1833 it accounted for 90 per cent of all East India Company shipments from China, and yielded fabulous gains. The British government alone obtained up to 3.3 million pounds annually in tea duties, which amounted to approximately one-tenth of the country's total revenue.⁴⁰

Raw silk was another big item on the list of goods British merchants brought from China. From 1800 to 1833 the volume of silk shipments increased sevenfold.

United States traders were also eagerly engaged in the China trade. The U.S. share in China's imports increased on average from 6.3 per cent in 1795-1799 to 19.2 per cent in 1830-1833, with the share in exports rising from 6 per cent to 24.7. American merchants, who bought furs, spices, and sandalwood at next to nothing from Red Indians and in Oceania, sold their goods at a high profit in Guangzhou. Besides, they did profitable business in low-quality fabrics, which they bought in Britain and to which they attached labels attesting to high quality. The chief item on the list of American imports from China was tea, much of which was also shipped to European countries in American bottoms. In 1837-1838 the so-called China clippers, carrying the American flag, shipped out more than 15 million pounds worth of tea.⁴¹

The commerce with West European countries and notably the United States owed its growth largely to the active participation in it of independent Chinese merchants, not members of the Cohong. Granting loans to members of the Cohong and concluding transactions on their behalf, they sold foreigners tea, silk and cotton goods, and used the proceeds to buy cotton, British fabrics, and other commodities.

To retain control over the commerce and enterprise of foreigners, local Manchu authorities sought to obstruct private trading, often by extreme measures. In 1817, for example, more than 200 shops selling goods to foreigners were ordered to close. In July 1828, the local authorities published special regulations governing the commerce of private shops which reaffirmed the monopoly of Cohong members on a large assortment of commodities. But despite these obstacles, private trade between Chinese and foreign merchants continued to expand. When at the close of 1834 the Cohong merchants tried to spread their monopoly to goods handled by their Chinese competitors, they encountered determined resistance.

As trade with China expanded, British merchants who controlled and financed the trade between India and China, gained tremendous influence. Between 1817 and 1833 (excluding just two years), goods shipped in by them amounted to nearly three-quarters of total British imports. And after the East India Company's monopoly was abolished, private British capital became still more active. In 1834,

already 40 per cent more tea was being shipped out of China than the year before. The number of private British firms operating in Guangzhou rose from 66 in 1833 to 156 in 1837.

Opium shipments to China quite palpably strengthened the capability and muscle of foreign capitalists. The drug had been known in China since the 8th century under the Tang dynasty. Its importation was allowed for medical purposes, subject like all other goods to customs duties. At the time of the first imperial edict of 1729 prohibiting the sale and smoking of opium, its shipments to Guangzhou were relatively small, amounting to not more than 200 chests a year. But after the East India Company obtained a monopoly (in Bengal) on making and selling opium, its shipments to China grew rapidly, rising to 4,000 chests in 1790. Fearing that opium-smoking would spread, the Qing authorities issued a new ban on opium trading in 1796.

To avoid friction with the Chinese authorities, the East India Company went through the motions of forbidding its agents to bring opium to Guangzhou. This was in 1816. But it encouraged the contraband trade in opium, and increased production in its Indian possessions. The sale of the narcotic to private persons yielded immense profits to the East India Company. In fact, opium accounted for nearly two-thirds of its incomes. The British colonial administration, too, benefited. In 1829 alone, it received more than a million pounds or approximately one-tenth of all its revenue, in opium taxes.⁴² The biggest share of the profits, however, settled in the pockets of the British merchants. A leading British opium trader in Guangzhou, William Jardine, wrote to his friend in Essex in 1830, advising him to put his money into the opium trade, saying that it was the most dependable type of speculation for a true gentleman.⁴³

The opium trade also attracted Portuguese and American merchants. At first, Americans brought opium to China from Turkey and Persia, then, from 1821 on (with the permission of the East India Company) from India. In 1818, the firm of G. and T.H. Perkins alone shipped in 1,350 chests, setting a record in its own right.⁴⁴

In 1820, after the Chinese authorities ordered ships involved in contraband trading to stay out of Guangzhou, foreign merchants shifted to the island of Lingding. Here in the estuary of the Xijiang, floating warehouses were set up on old ships to store opium brought from India and other countries. In the 1820s, opium shipments to China rose to 10,000 chests yearly, and to as much as 40,000 chests in the 1830s.⁴⁵ In 1832, nearly two-thirds of all British cargoes shipped to China were opium. The rise in opium sales was so steep because opium production in India had gone up, speedier ships provided speedier delivery to Guangzhou, but mainly because the habit of opium smoking had spread up and down the China coast.

When Chinese sea patrols learned to disperse the fleets of smugglers coming to Lingding for opium in 1828, foreign opium merchants switched to fast, well-armed clippers.

Opium radically changed the nature of China's foreign trade via Guangzhou. Until 1833 Guangzhou's foreign trade balance had been almost invariably active, whereas after the East India Company's charter was repealed it turned passive. In 1836, the 80 million dollars' worth of opium shipped in surpassed the value of the shipped out tea and silk, the chief Chinese exports, by a million dollars.

The opium was a disastrous drain on China's silver. Between 1829 and 1840, as much as 56 million dollars' worth of silver left the country through Guangzhou, while only 7.3 million dollars' worth was brought in. While turning in part of the silver to the East India Company for promissory notes redeemable in London and elsewhere, private merchants shipped the rest to India to cover new opium purchases.

This pushed up the price of silver, the chief tender in China's state-governed economy. The higher cost of silver meant higher prices of consumer goods, adding to the misery of the mass of the people in town and country, while the spread of the opium habit impaired the health of large numbers of people.

The Decay of the Qing Regime and the Misery of the Peasants

Towards the end of the 18th century the feudalist Qing Empire went into decline, marked by a disintegration of the bureaucratic apparatus, a deterioration in the state of the armed forces and of the country's finances, more intensive exploitation of peasants, and rising popular resistance to national and feudal oppression.

The first symptoms of decay had appeared in the 1780s, as evidenced by court proceedings in Gansu province in 1784, which brought to light the immensity of the practice of embezzlement.

Like rust, corruption was eroding the Qing machinery of state. The exploits of Heshen (1750-1799), a court favourite, were a striking example of bureaucratic debasement. The dignitary's career began in 1775. The scion of a prosperous Manchu family, he attracted the emperor's attention as an officer of the imperial guard. In early 1776, he was appointed second in command of the Manchu banner in Beijing, and two months later deputy chief of the Office of Taxes. In another two months, Heshen was made member of the Imperial Secretariat, and within a month was put at the head of the Palace Supervisorate (*Neiwufu*), which dealt with all matters related to the servicing of the imperial court. And after his son's marriage to a daughter of the emperor in 1790, the dignitary's position grew stronger still.

Showered with the emperor's favours, Heshen occupied some

twenty posts and offices at one time, most of them not simply important and honourable, but also highly lucrative. From 1778 on, for a term of eight years, he was chief of the Beijing customs at the Chongwenmen gate, an office usually conferred for not longer than one year. To win his support, courtiers and government officials showered him with gifts, and it is reported that frequently Heshen rejected them as not being good enough for him, and demanded more precious objects. Heshen's vanity knew no bounds. Gifts sent to the emperor from the provinces or by neighbouring countries came first into Heshen's hands, and the most valuable ones went no further. He did a roaring business in titles and offices, practised usury, and bought up land. More than a thousand servants saw to his comfort in a palace built specially for him.

Heshen's avarice and abuses exercised a corrupting influence on the entire apparatus of state. Officials in the capital and the periphery followed in his footsteps, taking bribes, appropriating state property, and embezzling government funds. None of the complaints against Heshen and his coterie ever reached the throne, and only brought grief to those who set out in search of justice.

In February 1796, Emperor Hongli, who ruled under the reign title of Qianlong, officially abdicated at the age of 85 in favour of his fifteenth son, but control over the affairs of state remained in the hands of his favourite, Heshen.

The all-powerful potentate's misdeeds did not end until after the death of the aged emperor in February 1799. Eager to get rid of the power-loving minister, Emperor Yong Yan (reign title Jiaqing) requested his officials to inform him of the abuses rampant in the country. The new ruler's hint was more than transparent. Soon, the imperial censors submitted a memorial charging Heshen of various crimes and misdeeds. The former favourite was put in irons, interrogated, and sentenced to death.⁴⁶ His property, confiscated by the treasury, turned out to be much greater than the fortune of the imperial court. Some of the valuables—gold, jade, pearls and gems—could not even be properly priced. There was a dining set of 4,288 golden plates and other items, and there were 75,000 fur pelts. The estimated cost of the confiscated property just about equalled the country's income of eight years.* But Heshen's downfall did not improve matters. Laying his hands on the lion's share of the former

* Chinese authors differ in their estimates of the property confiscated from Heshen, both as to its volume and the separate items. Author Lei Pu, who refers like Xue Fucheng to the *Cha chao He Shen zhu-zhai hua-yuan gong-dan* (The Distract of Heshen), estimated that the Manchu dignitary had had more than 140,000 *liang* of silver in money-changing offices and loan-banks alone. (See Lei Pu [compiler], *Qing ren shuo hui* [Tales of the Time of the Qing], Book 2, 1917, p. 15.)

imperial favourite's fortune, the new emperor did nothing at all to punish or curb his associates.

By the 1820s, corruption grew to unheard-of proportions, afflicting all the many echelons of power. Bribery and embezzlement were doing the country especially grave harm. Bribes were accepted even by the emperor, in the form of official and unofficial gifts. From the chief of customs in Guangzhou, for example, he received gifts thrice yearly valued at 800,000 *liang*. Embezzlements had become so commonplace that they no longer elicited censure from the censors, whose duty it was to report all abuses and malfeasances to the throne. In 1820, one censor was gratified to note that the officials supervising public works on the Huanghe had pocketed only 60 per cent out of the sums allocated by the treasury for the repair of dikes and other installations, as compared with the usual 70 per cent. Bribery and embezzlements among officials were compounded with usury and extortion, with officials levying all sorts of unlawful duties and taxes for private gain. Not only peasants and artisans suffered, but traders as well. Instead of the official 1 per cent sales tax, they were sometimes made to pay 20 per cent.⁴⁷

The decay of the Qing regime was accentuated by the spread of corruption to the army—sale of offices and ranks, appropriation of soldiers' money and rations, bribes, and so on. Officers bought gifts for higher commanders on soldiers' wages. The empress's brother, who was in command of the Manchu banner in Gansu province, and his second in command, received nearly 14,000 *liang* of silver in this way. The commander of the Manchu banner in Jilin province was also found to have appropriated soldiers' money. Bannermen were given rotten food, and officials pocketed the profit. As a result of the usurious practices of Chinese merchants and Manchu officers, soldiers' families tottered on the brink of complete ruin.

The Chinese troops were not much better off. Manchu and Chinese officers collected the wages and rations of deceased and still listed soldiers, and cheated recruits roped in from among tramps and beggars out of their wage.

The absence of drill and discipline in both the Manchu and Chinese banners was made worse by the obsolete arms and materiel. Only a few of the soldiers had muskets. The artillery consisted of light portable 45-mm guns (of the falconetto type) and heavy copper or cast-iron pieces tied by ropes to the gun-carriage or to wooden logs when fired. The guns of the coastal forts were usually of small calibre and incredibly heavy (up to 7 tonnes).

The navy, too, was in a sad state. Owing to the continuous pilfering of treasury funds some of the flotillas (e.g. in Zhapu and Xiamen) were below strength. Newly-built junks were often of such low quality they could not be used in combat. Naval exercises that were

supposed to be held once a year, were often called off, and sailors and officers were mostly unadapted for long voyages.

The banners and the naval fleets were as a rule headed by incompetent commanders who treated military expeditions as a means of filling their pockets with treasury money.

The country's finances were running to seed owing to official corruption and the ruin of peasants, the chief taxpayers. In 1823, only five of the provinces in China proper were able to square accounts with the central government, while the other thirteen owed the treasury between 1 and 4 million *liang* of silver each. In October 1833 the *Jingbao* of Beijing reported that in the previous several years state expenditure exceeded revenue by more than 30 million *liang*. A special committee set up to search for ways of obtaining additional revenue, recommended the throne to permit the sale of scholarly titles. Though this went counter to tradition, the court was forced to accept the recommendation as a temporary measure. But by the end of the 1830s the country's finances were in a worse state still. Though in 1830 all arrears had been written off, by 1839 they grew again to the substantial sum of 39,400,000 *liang* (not counting arrears on treasury loans, and for salt patents). The chronic deficit was evidence of grave financial difficulties.

The decay of the feudal bureaucratic system was accompanied with growing political reaction. The slightest criticism of the Qing regime was vindictively punished. The eminent scholar Hong Liangji, who made bold to speak of the true state of affairs and pleaded for Heshen's henchmen to be punished in a memorial to the Dragon Throne, was sentenced to death, though later pardoned and banished to Xinjiang.⁴⁸ Even the most well-intentioned and loyal projects of 'appeasing' the people often brought grief in their wake to their authors.*

The Qing court displayed presumptuous ignorance in matters of foreign policy. Most of the Manchu and Chinese dignitaries clung to

* In 1833, the official Jin Mingguan submitted a memorial to the Censorate (*Duchayuan*), setting forth a plan of 'pacifying' the population. He proceeded on the assumption that all offences against the law, including the risings of secret societies, were due chiefly to the sad plight of the people, which 'was groaning from hunger and cold', and recommended the Qing government to buy land from private persons and organise settlements for landless people on the lines of 'well fields' (*jintian*) that were said to have existed in ancient China. Not to overstrain the treasury, he suggested following the example of medieval rulers and issuing paper money in payment for land, which could thereupon be redeemed through annual levies from the new owners of the land. Though the censors found no hint of sedition in Jin Mingguan's memorial, he was first sentenced to three years' banishment to a border region, but later committed to strict surveillance of the local authorities. (See *Xing an hui lan* [Collection of Verdicts in Criminal Cases], 1844, sheets 54-56.)

the traditional Chinese view of the outside world, wanted no knowledge of other countries, and held all things foreign in utter contempt. The Manchu princes possessed large estates and received rent from their peasant tenants. They led a parasitic life of indolence and dissipation. In 1838, the Beijing police discovered more than 80 underlings in the dungeons of a Manchu prince, subjected by the sadist to various abominations.⁴⁹

By the end of the 18th and early in the 19th century the peasants were reduced to a still sorrier plight through the continuing concentration of land in the hands of the landed gentry and the rising pressure of taxes. Though officially the Qing introduced no new duties, the burden was constantly augmented by various kinds of impositions. As a rule, the levies were introduced by officials for their own gain. Requisitioning rice for shipment along the Grand Canal to Beijing, for example, 14 million *dan* instead of the required 4 million were exacted from the peasants of seven provinces (where this tax in kind was practised), out of which 10 million *dan* were appropriated for their personal needs by provincial officials.

Bureaucrats added a variety of 'local' levy to the official taxes by arbitrarily raising the rate of silver when converting taxes in kind into cash. In the provinces on the middle and lower Yangzi, officials required the peasants to turn in an additional 5 to 7 *dou* of rice for every *dan* paid as taxes. In Shandong province, officials charged 4,000 *wen* for every *liang* of silver when collecting the land tax, while in the open market a *liang* was rated at 2,600 *wen*.⁵⁰ The big landlords, especially of the scholar gentry, paid much lower taxes for their land than required by law, buying the acquiescence of officials by bribery.

The extortions of bureaucrats were, in effect, encouraged by the Qing authorities. By the existing law, county and commandery chiefs were raised in rank if they collected taxes in full for three consecutive years. In 1837, Wuergune, governor of Zhejiang province, sought the promotion of a county chief who had for six consecutive years annually collected more than 40,000 instead of the required 30,000 *liang* of silver from the peasants. Any hint of protest was summarily and brutally punished. In 1828, for example, the chief of Huangxian county in Shandong had peasants who tried to persuade him not to raise the tax severely beaten with bamboo poles. When people of the neighbouring villages learned of this and crowded round the house of the chief, troops were called out who brutally maltreated the protesters.

The landlords, too, did not stick at violence to make their tenants pay a higher rent. They dealt severely with anyone who could not pay the required cash or bring the needed quantity of grain within

the fixed time. A memorial to the throne from Rehe in 1812 informed the court that the servants of a Manchu prince had beaten a peasant to death for not having the money to pay his rent.⁵¹ Driven to desperation by lack of land, peasant families were compelled to sow their tiny plots to the same crop for several consecutive years. As a result the land stopped bearing and became useless. In 1824, there were more than 70,000 *qing* of such exhausted land in the province of Zhili. The growing area of abandoned land and the decline in yields spoke of agricultural degradation. Farming met the needs of the people less and less. Owing to the ruthless oppression, peasants sold their land and moved to new places. In the 1820s, for example, there were nearly 20,000 to 30,000 settlers along the southern border of Manchuria alone, though Chinese were forbidden to live there. There were also many settlers in Southern Mongolia, Xinjiang, and other ethnic areas.

Hundreds of thousands of homeless peasants turned into tramps. They inundated nearly all the cities. In Beijing alone, the corpses of nearly 8,000 homeless beggars who died from exposure and hunger were picked up in the streets of a cold February night in 1796. The surplus of unemployed peasant hands also affected the condition of the urban artisans, who feared losing their jobs and were willing to work for semi-starvation wages at private enterprises.

The dreadful plight of the mass of the people was aggravated by the frequent natural disasters. Cholera epidemics broke out in Beijing three times between 1821 and 1823. During the first epidemic, up to 800 corpses were said by witnesses to have been carted out of the capital through each of the nine gates every day. In the summer of 1822, there were rainstorms in Zhili province, with 80 of the 143 counties and commanderies being badly flooded.⁵² Torrential rains struck Beijing and its environs in mid-1823, lasting for 17 consecutive days. In August 1831, the Yangzi flooded five provinces, causing great suffering.* The damage done by the flood was so great that one of the censors suggested in a memorial to the throne that people of 'low occupations' should be permitted to take civil service examinations, provided they made substantial donations for the relief of the victims of the calamity.

The deteriorating plight of the people intensified the class struggle

* In years of dearth, peasants were known to sell their children. D. C. Chestnoy, a member of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission, wrote from Beijing to St Petersburg on 13 August 1832 that there was a terrible drought in the land since the spring: 'There is no hope of a harvest. Villagers are long tormented by hunger; the poor are making for the capital, but no beggars are allowed into the city for fear of riots. Some of them are selling their children just outside the city, a boy of 7 to 9 years fetching a mere 2,000 *wen*.' (See Lenin State Library of the USSR, Department of Manuscripts, ms. 273, No. 2888/1, sheet 157.)

throughout the country. Secret societies and religious sects led the peasants in countless rebellions.

The People's Struggles Against the Regime

The biggest of the rebellions of the end of the 18th century was the one started in Hunan province by the Bailianjiao, a religious sect, in 1796. One of the leaders of the sect, Liu Song, had been arrested in Henan in 1775, and banished to Gansu. His disciples Liu Zhixie and Song Zhiqing toured the provinces of Shenxi, Sichuan, and Hubei, preaching rebellion, recruiting supporters, and collecting funds. In 1788, Liu Zhixie proclaimed the son of a sect member, a little boy named Wang Fashen, a descendant of the Chinese Ming dynasty.

In 1794, in reprisal for an attack on a police guard and the forcible freeing of a leader of the sect from gaol, the authorities made wholesale arrests. More than a hundred people were taken into custody in Xiangyang (Hubei province), including Song Zhiqing. He was tortured, but gave away no information. About 500 came under investigation. Some of the conspirators were sentenced to death, others to exile in Xinjiang and Heilongjiang, where they would be given to Manchu bannermen and officers as slaves. To avoid disturbances among the local people, the authorities decided to ship them to their exile in small groups. As one such group was crossing Henan province, Liu Zhixie succeeded in escaping. A new, still more frenzied, wave of arrests followed. Breaking into the homes of peasants, officials apprehended people on the slightest suspicion. In Wuchang prefecture alone, they arrested several thousand peasants, who were then cruelly tortured. These abuses were the last straw. They exhausted the patience of the people. On 15 February 1796, ahead of the date set by Liu Zhixie for a general uprising, the peasants of Yidu and Zhijiang counties in Hubei province started a rebellion. As word of the rising travelled to other counties, people there joined in. In Xiangyang, where prominent Bailianjiao leaders, such as Yao Zhifu, Qi Wangshi (widow of a sect leader), and Zhang Hanchao, took charge, the peasant movement was especially strong. The Hubei events alarmed the Qing government, which despatched a large military force to the province.

Meanwhile, the struggle gained in intensity. When detachments of Hubei rebels appeared in the eastern part of Sichuan province, driven there by government troops, local chiefs of secret societies called on the population to rise. The peasants of Dazhou prefecture responded to the call of Xu Tiande on 15 October 1796. Thereupon, the rebellion spread swiftly to other counties and prefectures.

Though the rebels' actions were as a rule unco-ordinated, their numbers gave the rising great strength. In a fairly short time, they managed to capture several towns. They fortified them, and conducted a war of manoeuvre. But this tactic was often unsuccessful, and many of the rebel units reverted to fluid guerrilla warfare. In 1797, three columns of Hubei rebels set out north. When crossing Henan province they recruited fresh strength, and entered Shenxi in larger numbers. Upon force crossing Hanshui river, they reached eastern Sichuan and came into contact with the units of Xu Tiande and other peasant leaders at Dongxian. Here large troop formations were organised out of the separate detachments. Military ranks were introduced, which made for better discipline and co-ordination.

After the unification of the main force, the troops under Yao Zhifu, Wang Tingzhao, and Qi Wangshi headed for Hubei, where they administered a series of defeats to the government troops. On reaching the southern part of Shenxi, the force returned to Sichuan. The Hubei leaders regrouped forces once more, this time making four armies. In March 1798, they reopened their campaign in Shenxi. Thrusting north to Xian, the unit under Yao Zhifu and Qi Wangshi ran into trouble, and turned east. In Yunxi county (Hubei) it was surrounded by government troops, who gradually tightened the ring in the hope of capturing the rebel leaders. But Yao and Qi chose death, committing suicide by jumping off a vertical cliff.

In the meantime, the rebellion grew in scale. The fighting spread to the southern part of Gansu province. The struggle in Sichuan grew more ferocious. Aided by the local population, the rebels delivered a series of painful blows at the main government force in 1798-1799. Driving into Hunan province, rebel units under Xu Tiande and other peasant leaders smashed the Manchu forces at Kaixian. In early 1800 a rebel force under Ran Tianyuan attacked the headquarters of government troops near Cangxi. The battle lasted through the night. Not until daybreak did the rebels withdraw to Kaixian. Some time later, the unit crossed the Tongjiang, threatening the provincial centre of Chengdu.

The many rebel victories in the first several years of the rising were due most of all to the support of the local people, but also to the weakness of the government camp. Corruption and abuse were an obstacle to rapid and effective mobilisation. Out of fear of the rebels, many Qing generals chose to sit it out behind the walls of fortified cities or to pursue the adversary at a respectable distance rather than engage him in battle. Yet in their memorials to the throne they exaggerated the gains of their troops, presenting the figure of slain prisoners and civilians as that of 'rebels killed in battle'.

By early 1800 the government forces became more reliable. The removal of Heshen, the imperial favourite, and the replacement of

worthless generals by more vigorous men improved the condition of the army in the field. The Qing encouraged the formation of rural militia units (*xiangyong*) financed by local landlords, and began building fortifications round the rebel areas at the end of 1799. Whenever rebels appeared in the vicinity, local people with their livestock, grain and other possessions were driven into these forts. Though reprisals were not discontinued, the throne resorted more and more to blandishments and lies, trying to prevail on the less firm elements among the rebels to surrender. In mid-1800, after Liu Zhixie was captured in Henan and brought to Beijing in a cage, the emperor even announced that those members of the Bailianjiao who 'abided by the law' would not be prosecuted.

But the armed struggle did not subside. In April 1800, fierce fighting erupted at Matigang (in western Sichuan), where units under Ran Tianyuan had their encampment. Government troops supported by the rural militia mounted attack after attack on the rebel positions for three days and nights, but all in vain. Only after the rebels had lost their leader did they begin to withdraw, to be routed after ferocious clashes. In the spring, the Qing troops finally cleared Gansu province of rebels.

The tide had begun to turn in favour of the government troops. Largely, this was due to the construction of a system of fortifications in eastern and northern Sichuan. The 'scorched earth' tactics of the government forces deprived the rebels of sources of manpower and provision. Besides, their frequent forcible recruiting and food requisitioning had impaired the rebels' bonds with the mass of the people. On top of this, the gentry's rural militia units were a formidable power of great help to the Manchu troops. They knew the terrain, and had accurate information about the state of affairs in the rebel camp. From late 1799 on, some rebel groups fell for the false promises of the authorities, and began surrendering. One victim of the blandishments dispensed by the Qing commanders was the prominent rebel leader, Wang Sanhuai. He trusted the promises of a county chief and came with his troop to the enemy's headquarters, where his men were attacked and eliminated, while he himself was seized.

In early 1802, the Qing army set out for southern Shenxi in pursuit of the rebel force under Xu Tiande, Wang Tingzhao, and other rebel leaders. Within two months it succeeded in smashing several large rebel formations, including the unit of Wang Tingzhao. Wang was captured and sent to Beijing. A short time later, in mid-1802, when crossing a river in Dazhou prefecture (Hubei) Xu Tiande drowned, whereupon his large army dispersed.

While government troops were mopping up the scattered rebel groups in Sichuan, Hubei, and Shenxi, a force of rebels under Gou

Wenming thrust into Gansu. It took the Qing command six months to take control of the situation and drive Gou's rebels into a remote, unpeopled area. Unable to obtain food, the rebels lost heart and began surrendering. Gou himself was captured in August 1803, and executed.

By the end of the year, the Qing were finally in control of almost all Sichuan, Hubei, and Shenxi. But there were still rebel forces in the forestland at the junction of the three provinces. They fought on stubbornly against overwhelming odds. In mid-1804, the government mounted a massive mopping-up operation in the area, and wiped out the last seat of resistance. But no sooner the authorities began disbanding the local self-defence detachments and the rural militia than the struggle was renewed. Not until the autumn of 1805 was the situation wholly stabilised in the three provinces.

Among the reasons for the rebels' defeat was the lack of a clear programme and of slogans that would have won the minds of the bulk of the peasantry. Though the Bailianjiao sect did preach equality and social justice (equality of men and women, for example, and egalitarian distribution of property among rich and poor), these ideas were not made the object of the struggle for a better deal. There was no integrated leadership, the operations of the rebel units were, as a rule, unco-ordinated. It did the movement little good, too, that its leaders were spurred by localistic aims, and that the units were all essentially formed on the localistic principle.

The 1796-1804 rebellion left a strong imprint on the policy of the feudalist ruling class. In 1801, the Dragon Throne was compelled to repeal the edict permitting Manchu princelings and the military estate to raise land rents at will or to drive peasants off the land if they objected to higher rents.⁵³

At the time when a turning point favouring the government troops was first felt in the Bailianjiao rebellion, 'pirates' consisting mainly of landless peasants and fishermen became active along the south-eastern coast. Initially, they enjoyed the support of Kuang Chong and his son, the rulers of Annam, but when Jia Long became king of Vietnam in 1803, the pirates' situation deteriorated, and they were forced to move their bases to the China coast. They attacked merchant vessels, did not evade engagements with government war junks, and made themselves scarce when outnumbered. In the winter of 1805, a fleet of junks under Cai Qian attacked Taiwan and came away with considerable booty. At the end of 1807, near Heishui in Guangdong province, the fleet was engaged by a large government naval force. The Qing commander, Li Changgeng, was killed in the engagement and, taking advantage of the ensuing confusion, Cai Qian led his fleet into the open sea. But in 1808, in an engagement at Dinghai, his junks were defeated. To evade capture by the enemy,

Cai Qian scuttled his junk and went down with his crew. Not until 1810 did the Qing authorities finally eliminate the scattered pirate groups active along the Guangdong coast. The punitive expeditions against the pirates revealed the crippling malfeasances of the officialdom, and the weakness of the Manchu navy.

In September 1813, the Tianlijiao (Heavenly Reason) religious sect, a ramification of the White Lotus secret society, started a rebellion in Henan province. Peasants, artisans, petty traders, officials, even some court eunuchs, took part in it. The peasants joined in *en masse* because the sect leaders, Li Wencheng and Lin Qing promised them land. Though the parcels were to be paid for with a modest cash contribution to the sect's treasury, the farmers, especially landless farmers, were eager recruits. As for the officials, they were promised higher offices. When joining the secret society they had to contribute several *dan* of grain.

In early 1812, Lin Qing came to see Li Wencheng in Huaxian county (Henan), where a large gathering of Tianlijiao members was held in preparation of the rebellion in the commercial quarter of Daokouzhen. Towards the close of the year, Li Wencheng returned the visit, calling on Lin Qing in the village of Huangcun (south of Beijing), where they conspired to start a joint action in Zhili, Shandong, and Henan. They established close contacts with the servants in the imperial palace, and held ready a force of secretly trained armed peasants. This handful, the conspirators held, would be enough to capture Beijing in a sudden assault from outside and inside. The general rising was to begin at several points simultaneously at noon on the 15th day of the 9th moon of the coming year (8 October 1813).

Despite the strict secrecy shrouding the conspiracy, rumours of it spread quickly. Information given by a smith arrested for making weapons, enabled the authorities of Huaxian county to capture Li Wencheng and his closest associate, Niu Liangchen. At the interrogation, both Li's legs were broken, and Niu was cruelly beaten. Learning of the arrest of their leaders, 3,000 conspirators started the rebellion on 30 September 1813, in advance of the scheduled day. They captured the county town, wiped out the local officials, and released Li and Niu from prison. Thereupon Li, who had been a carpenter, was declared Heavenly Prince, that is, the ruler of China, while all his closest associates were given princely titles and military ranks. Over the tent of Li Wencheng a standard was raised, on which the wives of the rebels embroidered the inscription, 'Li, the true ruler of the great Ming dynasty in the Tianshun period'. This inscription, with the reign title of Tianshun, gave to understand that Li was the lawful heir to the imperial throne usurped by the Manchus. The success in Huaxian was a call to action for other branches of the

secret society, which managed to capture several more county towns. On receiving word of the events in Henan, the Qing despatched a large force to block the rebels' way to the capital.

In the meantime, Lin Qing, who knew nothing of the uprising, acted as he had earlier agreed with Li Wencheng. On 7 October he sent 200 men to Beijing, who were to be smuggled into the palace grounds with the help of trusted eunuchs. Lin Qing himself stayed behind in the village of Huangcun, waiting for word from Li Wencheng. At noon on 8 October the conspirators attacked the Forbidden City in two groups. The attempt to enter it from the east through the Donghuamen gate failed, because the palace guard had hastily closed the gate on seeing the approaching force. Only ten of the conspirators managed to make their way inside the Forbidden City. On encountering resistance, they turned tail. The other unit, which attacked from the west, through the Xihuamen gate, was more successful. The guard was eliminated, whereupon the rebels closed the gate from inside, and headed for the palace buildings. The appearance of an armed group (of 80 men) with white headbands and white flags in their hands created a commotion among the inmates of the Forbidden City. Officials and servants hid themselves, and only a few tried to put up a resistance. On passing several of the buildings, the conspirators headed for the inner chambers of the imperial palace. But here they were met with musket fire, and were forced to retreat. When about to leave the Forbidden City through a gate that happened to be open, they ran into the imperial guard. Taking advantage of the darkness, they hid in a coalshed, but on the following day, when trying to escape, they were caught.

The night before, the local authorities had learned from captured rebels the name of their leader, and sent a group of soldiers to Huangcun village. The soldiers came to Lin Qing's house early in the morning of 9 October, when his men were still asleep. They told Lin that the rebels had triumphed in the capital, and suggested that he go with them, ostensibly to ascend the throne. Despite the protests of his elder sister, Lin got into the carriage and was soon brought to Beijing. The interrogation was conducted by the emperor in person, who had hastened back to the capital on learning of the conspiracy. Despite cruel torture, Lin named none of his accomplices, and went to his death bravely.

On finishing off the participants of the conspiracy in the capital, the throne concentrated on suppressing the rebellion in Zhili, Shandong, and Henan. To secure numerical superiority, additional forces, including troops from Manchuria, were despatched to the areas of the fighting. In the beginning of November, the main government force mounted an offensive on Daokouzhen, against 30,000 rebels. The Qing troops surrounded the township on three sides, and

began the attack on 19 November. The battle lasted twelve hours. Some 10,000 rebels were killed. The survivors, headed by Xu Anguo, who had been in charge of the town's defence, withdrew to Huaxian. The main Qing forces, too, set out for Huaxian, at the approaches to which they set up their camp. But they feared storming the town straightaway. When more troops arrived from Manchuria, the situation of the besieged rebels grew desperate. One rebel leader, Liu Guoming, broke through the line of besiegers at night with a troop of 800 horsemen, and offered to carry Li Wencheng to safety. On abandoning Huaxian, Li gathered some 4,000 men, and locked himself up in a mountain fortress, Sizhai (Huixian county, Henan).

The government sent a picked force against Li. Early in the morning of 12 December it stormed his positions. Twice the defenders made it turn back under a hail of stones. Towards noon, however, the attackers managed to destroy part of the wall, and broke into the fortress. There was bitter hand-to-hand fighting in the streets, in which many of the rebels laid down their lives. Not wishing to surrender, Li ordered his men to kill him.

The defenders of Huaxian refused to lay down their arms despite the fall of Sizhai. Not until 1 January 1814 did the Qing troops succeed in entering the town through a breach in the wall created by an underground explosion. The rebels defended themselves fiercely. Li Wencheng's widow, too, fought bravely. Nearly 15,000 of the town's defenders died in the fighting. Those who were captured (2,000 or 3,000) were killed on the spot. Niu Liangchen and Xu Anguo, who had been wounded in battle, were seized and delivered to Beijing in wooden cages. There they were executed.

After taking Huaxian, the Qing troops quelled peasant risings in other areas with relative ease.

Despite its failure, the rebellion of 1813-1814 greatly impaired the prestige of the Dragon Throne. The carnage that was visited on members of secret societies and religious sects following the defeat of the rebellion was a token of Qing weakness. Terror and intimidation could not halt the spread of anti-Manchu sentiment or the liberation struggle of the Chinese people. While the Manchu generals were busy suppressing the Henan rising, disturbances broke out among labourers in the timber camps of the mountainous Sancaixia area in neighbouring Shenxi province. The eruption was caused by the timber merchants' closing their enterprises due to the rising price of grain.⁵⁴ The dismissed timbermen, headed by Wan Wu, went to the merchants to borrow grain. They were refused any loan, and attacked the homes and warehouses of their employers. Local troops were called out, and the rebels were compelled to withdraw to the mountains. At first, they acted with some success, but after the arrival of large government reinforcements lost the initiative. In the

middle of January 1814, the biggest of the rebel detachments, under Wan Wu, was smashed. Wan Wu was trapped, seized, and beheaded. The other rebel units were also dispersed.

Armed peasant actions against the Qing continued through the 1820s and 1830s. Though they were, as a rule, of a local nature and were fairly quickly suppressed by government troops, they spoke of the growing disaffection of the mass of the people.

The peasant risings were often accompanied by risings of non-Chinese peoples held down by the Qing. The biggest was the rebellion in Eastern Turkestan, precipitated by the sharp deterioration of the condition of the people there owing to the corruption and abuses of Manchu-Chinese officials. The movement against the national oppression of local people was headed by a member of the white-mountain feudal nobility, Djangir, grandson of Burkhan ad-Din, who had been overthrown by the Manchus in 1758. In the summer of 1820, Djangir and a small band of followers set out from Kokand to the nomad Kirghiz encampments. Here, winning the support of the Kirghiz elders who were displeased with the behaviour of the Qing border authorities, he gathered several hundred horsemen, and crossed the border in the autumn of 1820. At Kashgar, his troop was defeated, and forced to turn back. Making camp in the upper reaches of the Naryn, where the Qing troops did not venture to follow him, Djangir began preparing a rebellion in Eastern Turkestan. For this he formed a new force of horsemen, sent his people to the towns and villages of Kashgaria to recruit followers, and to disseminate proclamations. Djangir won the allegiance not only of the Kirghiz, who were fed up with the frequent raids of Qing troops, but also of the Kokand ruler who was paid a handsome annual sum in silver by the Dragon Throne to watch over the activity of the fugitive white-mountain *khojas* from Kashgaria. For his help, Djangir promised the Kokand khan, Mahmed-Ali, half the military booty and the possession of Kashgar.

In July 1826, Djangir and a cavalry force of 500 (men from Andizhan and Kirghizia) reappeared in Kashgaria. A government force sent against them from Kashgar ran into trouble and turned back. With many local recruits adding considerably to his strength, Djangir approached Kashgar. The Uighurs in the city rose against the Manchus and were helped by the men from Andizhan. As a result, nearly all Kashgar fell into the hands of the rebel force, and Djangir was declared sultan. During the siege of the Kashgar fortress, where the Manchu-Chinese garrison sought refuge, the Kokand khan arrived to aid Djangir. Joint attempts to capture the fortress failed, however, and the khan of Kokand with the bulk of his troops left Eastern Turkestan. On 21 November, Djangir finally took complete possession of Kashgar. Soon, three other large cities—Jangigissar, Yarkend,

and Khotan—also came under Djangir. In the flush of victory, Djangir decided on a campaign against Dzungaria with the object of conquering Kuldja and Turfan.

In the meantime, the Qing were hastily fitting out reinforcements. In early March 1827, a Qing force of 22,000 horsemen and foot soldiers set out from Aqsu. It defeated Djangir, and he was forced to flee to the Kirghiz. The Chinese generals were afraid to pursue him across the border, and sent agents to spread false word about the Qing troops having withdrawn from Kashgar. Djangir trusted the rumour, and again crossed the border with a force of 500 men in January 1828. But soon he found that the rumour was false, and turned back. The Qing troops caught up with his detachment, however, and after several short clashes Djangir was captured.

One of the main reasons for the defeat of the rebellion in Eastern Turkestan was the refusal of the Uighur peasants, artisans and tradesmen to carry on with Djangir, who, though he had come to power with their help, did nothing to mitigate their lot. Officials merely changed their Chinese garb for Moslem clothes. The feudal order in towns and villages was in essence unchanged. Besides, the ethnic diversity of Djangir's army, with a large percentage of Kirghiz and of people from Kokand and Andizhan, was a frequent cause of skirmishes between the rebels and the local people. Religious strife, too, especially acute after a plot of the local clergy, the black-mountain *akhuns*, against Djangir was discovered, was another debilitating factor. And in addition, the feudal lords of the eastern part of Kashgaria helped the Qing troops against the rebels in disregard of the true interests of their people.

After Djangir was beheaded in Beijing, his brother Yusup, aided by the khan of Kokand, renewed the attempt to gain control of Eastern Turkestan. In the autumn of 1829, his forces crossed the border and besieged Kashgar and Yarkend. Unable to capture the cities, Yusup's soldiers engaged in plunder, alienating the local people. Mauled by a Qing force that was sent to relieve the besieged, Yusup escaped across the border. Then, after the Dragon Throne concluded a commercial agreement with the khan of Kokand in 1831, a temporary calm set in on the western border of the Qing Empire. But the struggles of the non-Chinese peoples against the Manchu regime did not end.

In January 1832, the Yao tribes rose up in the southern part of Hunan province. The revolt was set off by the brutal conduct of the Chinese officials, who took advantage of the economic backwardness of the local people to virtually strip them of their possessions. In March, a punitive detachment on its way from Ningyuan to Lanshan was ambushed by the Yao and destroyed to the last man. When the rising spread to the neighbouring province of Guangdong, the Qing

sent a large military force against the rebels. To make sure of destroying the rebels, who were active in mountainous terrain, Manchu commander Luo Siju suggested drawing them into the open. Hard pressed on three sides, the Yao withdrew from their mountain villages after some heavy fighting, and installed themselves in the town of Yangquan. In May, Qing troops approached the city, and took it by storm. Zhao Jinglong, who had been in charge of the defenders, was seized and executed.

In 1836, another Yao rising erupted in the south-western part of Hunan province under Lan Zhengzong. He had joined a secret society, quickly assumed a place of leadership in it, and began preparing a rebellion. In March, several thousand rebels attacked the prefectural city of Wugeng. But the local authorities, who had had advance knowledge of the attack, managed to disperse and defeat them. Lan and two of his associates escaped, but fell into the hands of bandits and were killed.⁵⁵ The local authorities had all the chief participants in the rising beheaded, and burned the temple in which the rebels held their meetings. The burial ground of Lan Zhengzong's family was desecrated, while his mother and small children were given to local officials as slaves. A typical sample of how the Qing authorities dealt with those who dared rise against their regime.

In 1837, there were disturbances in the south-western part of Sichuan province, inhabited by mountain tribes. Armed with iron spears and sabres, and holding wicker shields, the aborigines fought the government troops with great courage for four months.

The heightened activity of secret societies and the struggles of the people against feudal and national oppression were clear evidence of the increasing crisis gripping the Qing Empire and foreshadowing grave political and social upheaval.

The Beginning of British Expansion

The decline of the Qing Empire was accompanied by the intensive expansion into China of the West European powers and the United States, all of them trying at any cost to open up the way for their commodities. At the close of the 18th century capitalist Britain, which held a secure first place in world trade, was the most active. When under French pressure in June 1801 Portugal signed an agreement closing all Portuguese ports to British shipping, the British governor-general of Bengal told the Portuguese administration in Goa that the British would not allow French ships to enter Macao harbour. This was in November 1801, and at the end of March of the following year six British warships approached Macao with the purpose of landing troops. Through their missionaries in Beijing, the

Portuguese turned for help to the Qing government, which took preventive action.⁵⁶ Fearing that an armed conflict would affect trade, the British command thought it wiser to withdraw. When the British naval squadron departed from Macao on 27 May 1802, the Qing authorities wanted a written undertaking from the Portuguese that they would never permit any foreign force in the territory of the port.

In January 1808, the British administration in India learned that France was again exerting pressure on Portugal, and that French troops were going to be sent to Macao soon to protect it against a British incursion. On 11 September 1808, British Vice-Admiral Drury arrived in Macao from Madras with a detachment of 300 men. After long negotiations with the Portuguese authorities, the British troops landed on the peninsula. In reprisal, the Qing cut off trade with foreigners on 8 October, and recalled Chinese servants and employees from the British factory on 17 October. Thereupon, the British admiral sent a letter to Guangzhou with the request to lift the ban on trade, and promising to leave Macao. On 19 December, all British soldiers boarded their ships, and trade was renewed in Guangzhou on 27 December.

In 1814 a British frigate, the *Doris*, entered the Xijiang delta, and captured an American merchantman. The local authorities ordered the British warship to leave immediately.⁵⁷ On the plea that he had no authority over the ship, the representative (*taipan*) of the British East India Company dodged the order. The Chinese retaliated by halting all commerce with the British, and did not renew it until the frigate left.

Having gained nothing from its resort to force, the British government—in a bid to expand trade with China—turned to diplomacy. An embassy was fitted out, headed by Lord Amherst (formerly British ambassador to Sicily).⁵⁸ Its aims were essentially the same as those of the first embassy under Macartney. The chief interest of the British cabinet lay in establishing a permanent British mission in Beijing to maintain direct relations with the Qing government.

Amherst sailed out of Portsmouth with a large group of retainers on two ships on 8 February 1816, and arrived at the Baihe estuary on 9 August. The members of the embassy disembarked in Tianjin (Tientsin), and were met by high-ranking Qing officials. From there, Amherst and his companions set out along the canal first to Tongzhou, and then on to Beijing. Amherst's barge carried this inscription in Chinese: 'Envoy with tribute from the British king'. As in Macartney's case, the inscription was a premeditated act of the Qing dignitaries, for in their very first conversation with the British envoy they insisted on his performing the *kowtow*. On 28 August, the embassy arrived at Yuanmingyuan, the emperor's country

residence near Beijing. The British envoy was immediately summoned to an audience, but declined to go, pleading ill health and saying that his baggage, in which his formal clothes and credentials were packed, had not yet arrived. The emperor sent a court physician to examine the British envoy, and commanded that one of Amherst's aides come to the interview on his behalf. But the latter, too, pleading fatigue, declined the invitation. In a towering rage, the emperor ordered the embassy out of the capital and out of the country.

The British envoy's refusal to perform the ceremony established at the imperial court annoyed the emperor. The high commissioners who had met the British embassy in Tianjin and then allowed the British ship to go on before Amherst had consented to the *kowtow*, were severely punished. Two other special officials, who accompanied Amherst from Tongzhou to Yuanmingyuan were put on trial. The emperor's pride was so badly ruffled that he gave the British Prince Regent George IV to understand that he should send no more embassies if he really wished to remain a faithful vassal of the Dragon Throne.

Amherst's embassy was Britain's last attempt to establish relations with China through diplomatic channels. After its failure, the industrialists and merchants of Britain inclined in favour of armed action to spread commerce to ports north of Guangzhou. To study China's military strength and evaluate commercial opportunities in new regions, a British ship, the *Amherst*, sailed north from Guangzhou under Hugh H. Linsay at the end of February 1832.⁵⁹ The party was accompanied by a German missionary, one Gutzlaff, who acted as interpreter. Sailing along the coast, the British ship visited Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai, Taiwan, and the Ryukyu islands. Despite the vehement objections of the local authorities, who demanded that the foreign ship leave at once, Linsay stayed at each port for as long as he required to collect information and draw maps. Entering provincial offices at will (in Fuzhou and Shanghai), the intruders insulted officials and comported themselves impertinently with local chiefs.

Linsay's voyage yielded important and far-reaching results. The outlook for trade with China turned out to be far less promising than the organisers of the expedition had originally thought. The local people were less than eager to buy British-made cloth, and often asked for their money back. Linsay drew the conclusion, however, that the opium trade could well be expanded. He stressed in his report that despite all bans and preventive measures of the Chinese government, the drug would find a good market in Fuzhou. Linsay took note of China's military weakness, and ventured the opinion that a war against that country could be won in an extraordinarily short time, and this at low cost in money and

manpower. This was just what the more bellicose of the British bourgeoisie wanted to hear. They began calling on the government to send a naval force to capture part or all of China.

The designs of the British bourgeoisie were fired by the act of Parliament of 28 August 1833, which granted every British subject the right to participate in the China trade. Though the East India Company's monopoly on tea and other Chinese exports would not end until 22 April 1834, the act offered British manufacturers and merchants many new opportunities in China. In December 1833 the British government appointed Lord Napier, a captain of the Royal Navy, its superintendent of trade in Guangzhou.⁶⁰ According to Palmerston's instructions he was to seek no direct contact with the imperial court before he had determined if it was possible to extend Britain's trade to other parts of China. Furthermore, Napier was to draw up recommendations on how to investigate the Chinese seaboard and to find out what points along it were suitable as anchorages in the event of war. He was not to interfere in the affairs of shipowners and merchants visiting new points along the Chinese coast. This meant, in effect, that he, the chief superintendent of British trade in Guangzhou, was not to interfere in the contraband trade in opium.

On 15 June 1834, the British superintendent arrived in Macao aboard the *Andromache*, and a few days later set out for the Xijiang estuary. On 25 June, he set foot on the grounds of the foreign factory in Guangzhou. On the following day he despatched his secretary with a letter to the governor-general of the province, but the local officials refused to accept it because it was not set out in the form of a petition. Napier refused to make the required alterations. The governor-general let it be known that Napier's behaviour was excusable for the one reason only that he had never been in China before and was unfamiliar with Chinese regulations; therefore, he might be allowed to investigate trade conditions at Guangzhou, but was to return to Macao after the investigation and not come again without permission. Two days later, on 30 June, the governor-general renewed the order for Napier to depart immediately and await the emperor's leave in Macao. Since the British superintendent ignored the order, the Guangzhou authorities introduced a set of restrictions for foreigners on 4 August. On 2 September, servants, interpreters and compradores were ordered to withdraw from the British factory. Local traders were told they were not to supply the British any food, and merchants from the hinterland were told to enter into no contacts with them. On 4 September, Chinese soldiers were posted round the factory, with Napier reacting to this by summoning armed force of his own. On 6 September, a squad of British seamen arrived at the factory. Then, on Napier's orders, two British warships anchored in the outer roads, the *Andromache* and

Imogen, entered the Xijiang estuary and approached Huangpu (Whampoa) despite gunfire from the Chinese forts. These moves were motivated less by reasons of self-defence than Lord Napier's intention to compel the Chinese authorities to back down. But his attempt failed.

Then, in view of the approaching commercial season, which usually began in October, to prevent the serious losses any further suspension of trade would cause, Napier announced on 14 September that he intended to leave Guangzhou. An agreement was reached with the Qing authorities that the British warships would withdraw from the Xijiang estuary, and Napier would be allowed unmolested passage to Macao. On 21 September, the British frigates sailed downriver, and on the 29th the local authorities lifted the trade ban.

After Napier's death in Macao, the office of British chief trade superintendent was assigned in October 1834 to John Davis, previously senior manager of the East India Company's mission in Guangzhou, and then, in January 1835, to George Robinson. The latter moved his residence from Guangzhou to Lingding island, where British and other vessels usually unloaded contraband opium.

In November 1836, the new Qing governor-general in South China, Deng Tingzhen, ordered nine foreigners involved in the opium trade out of Guangzhou. This gave chief trade superintendent Charles Elliot, who had taken over from Robinson, an opportunity to make contact with the Chinese authorities. He addressed a petition to the governor-general through the Cohong merchants, and received a permit to come to Guangzhou in April 1837. But Elliot's advances to be received by the governor-general proved in vain. In retaliation, Elliot refused to comply with the Chinese order to remove foreign vessels used as opium warehouses from Lingding. In so doing, he said it was not within his competence to oversee contraband trading, of which, he claimed, his king had no knowledge.

Earlier, in February 1837, Elliot wrote in a message to Palmerston that it was desirable for British warships to visit the Guangzhou coast from time to time. This, he held, would exercise pressure on the local authorities to ease the restrictions on the opium trade or, perhaps, lead to its complete legalisation.

On receiving Elliot's reports, which stressed the mounting strains over the contraband opium trade, the British government sent a naval squadron under Rear Admiral Frederick Maitland to China in November 1837.⁶¹ In July 1838, Elliot requested the governor-general in Guangzhou to send officers to meet the British Rear Admiral. But his request was left unanswered. On 4 August, three British warships approached Chuanbi, the anchorage of a fleet of Chinese war junks. The fairly polite reception accorded to Maitland by the Chinese naval commander, Guan Tianpei, and the polite

Chinese ceremonies did not prevent the Rear Admiral from seeing that the war junks were stationed under the protection of shore batteries. This prompted him to order his ships to withdraw, and they left Macao on the same day.

Having tried all available means of blackmail and intimidation against China without the desired effect, the British government cast about for a pretext to mount an armed attack. War became imminent as the Qing authorities redoubled measures to stop the inflow of opium.

Qing Relations With Russia

Unlike the Western powers, the Russian government was eager to have good-neighbour relations with China, for the two countries had a common frontier of great length and had a big mutual stake in maintaining and expanding the traditional commercial ties first established in the mid-17th century.

In April 1803, when an embassy was being fitted out to Japan, Count N.P. Rumiantsev, the Russian minister of trade, suggested in a report to Tsar Alexander I⁶² that a similar embassy be despatched to China with the object of expanding trade. Knowing from past experience of the obstructions caused to foreign embassies, the Russian government first decided to sound out the Qing court. A reply arrived in June 1804. The Manchus were willing to receive a Russian embassy, but wanted to be informed beforehand of the date of its departure and of the number of persons accompanying the envoy. Owing to delays in assembling gifts for the Dragon Throne, the Senate asked the Qing government in September 1804 to put off the embassy until the following year.

On 28 February 1805, Count Y.A. Golovkin was appointed envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary. His embassy was to be accompanied by an expedition under Count Jan Potocki, a Polish historian and naturalist. The expedition had an astronomer, a botanist, a zoologist, a mineralogist, an epidemiologist, a surgeon, a pharmacologist, and a linguist. According to his instructions, Golovkin was to obtain imperial permission to conduct trade all along the Russo-Chinese border or at least along its western sector (in Xinjiang), where it was already practised semi-legally since the end of the 18th century. The envoy was also told to seek Qing consent to Russian merchants trading in Guangzhou and, if possible, in Nanjing as well. He was to come to an understanding about the caravan trade with China, which Russian merchants had previously been allowed to conduct in Beijing, Manchuria, and Mongolia. The Russian envoy was also empowered to seek permission to station a permanent

Russian diplomatic representative in Beijing and, if this request was refused, to obtain the right for the head of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing to deal with the Chinese authorities in matters of trade.⁶³

In the beginning of July 1805, Golovkin left St Petersburg. He arrived in Irkutsk in September. While the Russian envoy acquainted himself with the state of affairs in Siberia, a letter arrived from the Manchu potentates in Urga. They complained that the Senate's letter had been unclear, because it did not say whether the embassy was carrying tribute for the emperor, and did not specify what the tribute consisted of. In this letter, as in an earlier one to the vice-governor of Irkutsk, the Urga rulers insisted that the envoy's party be reduced in number, and required a detailed list of the gifts it carried for the Dragon Throne.

On 17 October, Golovkin reached Kiachta, and on the 20th despatched an interpreter to Urga to notify of his arrival on the border and to set forth the aims of his mission. Golovkin's notification said that he was carrying a message in which the Russian emperor informed the Manchu ruler of his enthronement and expressed wishes of friendship with China.⁶⁴ While stating his consent to reduce his party, the Russian envoy said it was undesirable to submit a list of gifts, because some of them (including some large mirrors) might be inadvertently broken *en route* or might deteriorate during the long journey. The reply of the Russian envoy did not suit the Urga officials. They wanted the envoy's retinue reduced to 60 or 70 persons. Since Golovkin knew that the Qing authorities were trying to equate his embassy to that of a 'vassal' carrying 'tribute' to the emperor, he said he would not consent to reducing his party to the number specified by the Manchu officials.

At the end of December, an imperial edict finally arrived, permitting the Russian embassy to cross the frontier. When word of this reached Maimaicheng, the local Qing commissioner (*dzarguchei*) set out for Kiachta to notify the Russian envoy. For more than two hours he argued with Baikov, secretary of the embassy, over the conduct of the envoy when the emperor's will would be read to him. The Qing official declared that in such cases persons to whom the emperor addressed himself should kneel. Encountering firm objections, however, he insisted that the Russian envoy should at least hear the emperor's will standing up. In the end, the border official was brought before the count, who heard the message sitting down. Leaving behind most of the members of the scientific expedition and his guard of honour, Golovkin arrived in Urga on 15 January 1806. After the initial exchange of visits, the envoy was invited by the Urga rulers to a feast arranged in the name of the Manchu emperor. When Golovkin and his retinue arrived, the Urga ruler in the presence of a

large crowd instructed the Russian to perform the *kowtow* in front of the table, on which stood three lighted candles. Golovkin refused. After an argument that continued for five hours, he departed. On the following day, he was notified that if he did not perform the ritual, he could go back. To which Golovkin replied that he had no intention of returning to Russia until he received the order from the emperor himself.

In early February, a message came from Beijing, saying that if the Russian envoy did not perform the rites, he would be sent home. When Golovkin refused to come to the *yamen* of the Urga rulers to hear the emperor's message kneeling, its text was delivered to his residence. The Urga rulers suggested that Golovkin sign a pledge that he would perform the *kowtow* ceremony in Beijing a few days before the audience by way of 'rehearsal'. Golovkin turned the offer down, and began preparations for the return journey. On 15 February 1806, the Russian embassy left Urga for Kiachta. Having lost three months awaiting the permit to cross the border and another month in fruitless negotiations with the Qing authorities in Urga, the embassy returned to Russia.

Meanwhile, in the beginning of August 1803, an expedition departed from Kronstadt for the Far East under I.F. Kruzenstern and Y.F. Lisiansky aboard the corvettes, *Nadezhda* and *Neva*. Following delivery of goods to the Russian possessions in North America and Kamchatka, the expedition was to carry N.P. Rezanov's embassy to Japan, then proceed to Guangzhou to trade with Chinese merchants, and to conduct scientific explorations in the Pacific Ocean. Guangzhou was to be visited on the sole condition that Golovkin's embassy, which was then being fitted out, would obtain the pertinent permission from the Manchu court. Upon visiting Nagasaki, the Rezanov embassy was brought back to Kamchatka where, lacking any information about Golovkin's mission but counting on its success, Rezanov suggested that Kruzenstern sail for Guangzhou. On 20 November 1805, the *Nadezhda* reached Macao. To avoid entering the Xijiang estuary and await the arrival of the *Neva* in the outer roads, Kruzenstern told the Chinese authorities that his vessel was a warship. The *Neva* arrived twelve days later. The following day it headed for Guangzhou, taking aboard Kruzenstern who had been to the port before. Finding a guarantor—a Cohong merchant by name of Li Yanyu—the representatives of the Russo-American Company began unloading their goods with the permission of the customs commissioner. Shortly, at Kruzenstern's request, the second Russian ship, the *Nadezhda*, was also given permission to trade. But when the Russians began loading the goods they had bought, the local authorities placed the two ships under arrest pending instructions from the imperial capital.⁶⁵ This was done on the orders of the

Qing governor, Na Yancheng, who was afraid the emperor might punish him for letting the Russians trade in Guangzhou. Not until a second firm protest of the Russian seamen, did the local authorities withdraw their guards. Then, they allowed the *Nadezhda* and *Neva* to sail before any orders had come from Beijing.

The appearance of the Russian ships in Guangzhou, and especially that they were allowed to trade, annoyed the Qing court. Though customs commissioner Yan Feng in his memorial to the emperor opposed letting Russian merchants trade in Guangzhou on the contention that such maritime trade would reduce the revenue from overland trade through Kiachta, the emperor ordered him punished for exceeding his commission.⁶⁶

Golovkin's departure from Urga and the vigorous protest on this score by the Russian Senate to Beijing unnerved the Qing court and especially the border authorities. Fearing reprisals from the Russian government, the Urga commissioners ordered the officials in Maimaicheng to maintain the strictest order on the frontier and to display their friendship. Then, after Golovkin was recalled from Siberia at the end of 1806, the Qing's fears of possible Russian military preparations subsided. In 1809, the Urga rulers sent a letter to the Irkutsk governor, N.I. Treskin, saying they wanted to meet him. On receiving official permission, Treskin let the Urga rulers know of his consent. Thinking that the Russians would want to send a new embassy to Beijing with tribute, the imperial court ordered the Urga rulers not to oppose the wish, but instructed them to require that the embassy be reduced before it set out for the Chinese capital.

In March 1810, in Kiachta, Governor Treskin met the *ambans* from Urga. When the question of another embassy to China arose, Treskin proposed that the two sides sign an agreement on exchanging embassies on an equal footing. The ensuing discussion brought to light deep-going and intractable differences. But the two sides parted on fairly good terms. On receiving a memorial about the Kiachta talks, the Qing court instructed the Urga commissioners, in the event of the negotiations being renewed, to suggest that the Russians apply to the Lifanyuan with their request of sending an embassy, and to reassure the Russians of the throne's benevolence.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Russian envoy was not to be required to perform the *kowtow* in Urga. China, the Russians were to be told, would not send an embassy to Russia because the Qing Empire, which had numerous vassals, had never sent any envoys to other countries.

Though the Qing authorities showed reluctance to establish equal, mutually advantageous relations with Russia, the Russian government's policy remained friendly. Defining the principles of Russian policy, the director of the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Ministry, K.K. Rodofinikin, wrote to the head of the Russian

Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing on 26 April 1833 that 'the chief and constant purpose of the Russian Ministry in relation to China is both political and commercial; the political consists in maintaining and strengthening friendly ties with China as a state with which we have a common frontier of considerable length; the commercial consists in extending and widening our trade with China for the good of our industry and to the mutual advantage'.

Despite the refusal of the Qing authorities to have normal and equal diplomatic relations with Russia, as with other sovereign states, Russo-Chinese trade, especially at Kiachta, continued to be an important channel of intercourse between the two neighbour countries.

After the signing of the International Act in February 1792, the Kiachta market tended to revive after the long period of decline. In the first nine years after the Act, the turnover at Kiachta increased 70 per cent. And in the years that followed it continued to rise, though less rapidly. From 1801 to 1826 it went up from 8.2 million roubles to 12.3 million (i.e. 50.5 per cent).⁶⁸

A fairly high percentage of the goods sold to China in Kiachta were transit wares shipped via Siberia by foreign merchants. As may be seen from the report of Y.A. Golovkin from Troitskosavsk of 16 December 1805, the value of Russian commodities sold in Kiachta in the thirteen years since the signing of the International Act was only slightly higher than that of foreign-made transit wares (22,256,559 roubles against 20,729,857), with the latter visibly ahead in some years.⁶⁹ From January to October 1805, for example, Russian goods bartered in Kiachta were valued at 1,079,362 roubles and foreign goods at 1,754,150 roubles. Here is the dynamics of the Kiachta market in the first thirty years of the 19th century: goods bartered by Russian merchants in 1801-1810 averaged an annual 4,922,598 roubles in silver, 4,929,543 in 1811-1820, and 6,649,751 in 1821-1830.

Despite an annual accretion, the Kiachta trade grew slowly. Partly this was due to the Qing throne's discouraging Chinese merchants. To go to Kiachta, they were required to obtain a permit (*piao*) from officials in the capital. For this they naturally had to pay. The *piao* bore the merchant's name, place of birth, the description and quantity of his goods, and the place from which he set out on his journey. He had to present the permit to the military authorities in Kalgan, Guihuangcheng, or some other point, depending on his route. In Urga and Kiachta the permit was presented again, this time to officials of the Lifanyuan. Any merchant who travelled with goods and without a permit was severely punished: a heavy timber frame (*kangga*) was put round his neck, which he carried for two months, whereupon he received 40 strokes with a bamboo pole and was escorted to his home province, while half his goods went to the treasury.

The number of permits issued for the Kiachta trade was determined by the Beijing authorities, who thus effectively controlled the flow of merchandise to the Russian border. To be able to record the quantity of goods brought by Chinese merchants to Urga and Maimaicheng, local authorities were expected to inspect the permits every three years. According to a Mongolian officer who visited the Naushkinsky guardpost in October 1807, this was the duty of the Urga ruler (*amban*), but was mostly delegated to the *dzarguchei*, who were officials of the Lifanyuan.

Though they disregarded the restrictions and brought more goods to Maimaicheng than specified in their permits, the Chinese merchants were still unable to meet the demand, especially of those Russian merchants who were interested in bartering manufactured goods. Owing to the limited demand of the Chinese side, a considerable portion of the Russian merchandise was bartered below the established price or found no taker. According to P.L. Schilling, the Orientalist and inventor of the first workable electromagnetic telegraph, who studied Russo-Chinese trade during his stay in Kiachta in 1830-1831, the Russian merchants were still in possession of nearly one-third of their stock (mostly woollen and hemp goods, leather and furs) when the trading season ended.⁷⁰

Taking advantage of the Russians' constant surplus of stocks, Chinese merchants infringed on the mutually established weights—each measure (*tsibik*) of tea bartered in the 1820s and 1830s containing 50 and 65 pounds instead of the required 60 and 80 pounds.⁷¹

The Chinese merchants made up for the extortionate levies they had to pay Qing officials, customs officers, and the *dzarguchei* of Maimaicheng, and for the high transport costs, by setting high prices on their goods, while depressing the price of Russian wares. This was facilitated by the practice of direct barter, which complicated proportionate pricing of different goods since no money was involved in the deals.

In the 1830s, the Kiachta trade continued to grow: by the early forties, the turnover topped 16 million roubles. A fair idea of the expanding Russo-Chinese trade of that time may be gleaned from the following figures: the Chinese purchased 3,210,527 roubles worth of goods in 1830, and 4,881,457 roubles worth in 1835. In 1839, the sum was up to 6,363,443 roubles.⁷² In ten years, as we see, Russo-Chinese barter trade went up nearly 100 per cent.

From about 1825 to the middle of the 19th century there was a visible rise in Chinese imports of manufactured goods. Whereas in 1825 manufactured goods (chiefly fabrics) accounted for something like 30 per cent of all imports, the figure rose to over 50 per cent by the end of the 1830s. Meanwhile, with the production of factory-made woollen and cotton fabrics expanding in Russia, the export of

foreign-made fabrics via Kiachta declined in the early 1830s and stopped almost completely by the late 1840s. Already in 1833 there was more Russian than foreign-made broadcloth in Kiachta—447,000 *arshins* (Russian measure equivalent to 71 cm) against 325,000. With the share of manufactured goods rising in Russian exports via Kiachta, the export of furs, which had been the main item of Russian trade with China in the 18th century, tended to go down. In 1824-1828 furs still accounted for 50.7 per cent of average annual export value, while in 1836-1840 they dropped to 34.5 per cent.

There were changes in the structure of Chinese exports as well. With tea consumption rising in various parts of Russia, the flow of this commodity via Kiachta increased considerably. In the first forty years of the 19th century it climbed 420 per cent, its share in total Chinese exports (through Kiachta) being 90 per cent. In 1812-1817 the average annual value of black tea passing Kiachta was 60 per cent of total value of Chinese goods; 75 per cent in 1818-1824; 86 per cent in 1825-1831; 89 per cent in 1832-1838, and 91 per cent in 1839-1845. Meanwhile, Russian imports of Chinese cotton and silk fabrics declined, amounting to 26 and 21 per cent respectively in 1812-1817; 14 and 2.5 per cent in 1818-1824; 4.7 and 2.3 per cent in 1825-1831; 1 and 2.2 per cent in 1832-1838, and 0.4 and 1.8 per cent in 1839-1845.⁷³ Still, Russian imports of Chinese tea were lower than those of Britain and America. Meanwhile, the continuously rising demand in Russia and Western Europe (Britain and Holland) spurred an expansion of tea production in China, notably an expansion of tea plantations.

In the 1840s, more than 80 merchants from more than 20 cities of the Russian Empire took part in the Kiachta trade. On the Chinese side, judging from Urga records for nine months of 1840, there were close to 90. Their stay in Maimaicheng was usually limited to 100 days by order of the Qing authorities.⁷⁴

In addition to the barter trade at Kiachta-Maimaicheng and a few other border points, there was also some Russo-Chinese trading in Xinjiang, with caravans from Bukhtarma, Semipalatinsk and Petropavlovsk calling at the towns of Chuguchak, Kuldja, and Aqsu. The first such caravan, fitted out by a merchant named Nerpin, with merchandise worth 5,000 roubles, reached Chuguchak in 1809. The following year Nerpin sent another caravan with 10,000 roubles' worth of goods to Chuguchak and Kuldja. Many other merchants followed suit. In 1811, the value of commodities sent from Bukhtarma rose to 150,000 roubles. Chinese and local Xinjiang merchants responded by going to Bukhtarma, where they paid for goods in silver bars.

To encourage barter trade via Bukhtarma (where a customs post had been set up in 1798, replaced by a customs office in 1803), the

Russian authorities despatched the interpreter Putintsov to Dzungaria in 1811, where he was to study trading prospects. The information he gathered while in Kuldja, compounded with personal impressions, led Putintsov to conclude that trade in Russian wares (broadcloth, hides and leather) went on in Dzungaria in the name of the Kirghiz rulers and was subject to various serious restrictions imposed by the local Qing authorities. The latter, who knew that trade with Russians had been prohibited along the western sector of the Sino-Russian frontier, but who condoned it for the sake of the revenue it brought in, were mistreating and molesting Russian merchants, and setting their own terms. Noting the grave damage the ban inflicted on trade, Putintsov wrote: 'Such limitation of Russian trade denies many a benefit to China as well because, without any doubt at all, the shipment from Russia of good merchandise, and this not by covert means, would attract a still greater number of merchants here from the near-by trading towns.'⁷⁵

Many Russian merchants stopped sending their caravans to Xinjiang after a few initial experiments, which were unsuccessful owing to the semi-legal nature of the Russian trade in Dzungaria and the whims and abuses of the local officials. As a result, trade via Bukhtarma gradually declined, until it stopped almost completely by the 1840s.

There was some trading with Xinjiang through Semipalatinsk and Petropavlovsk, from which caravans left for Kuldja and Chuguchak almost every year. Russian goods were also brought to Aqsu. The first big caravan left Semipalatinsk with goods worth 110,306 roubles in July 1811. Another caravan, departing from Semipalatinsk in 1813, visited Aqsu with goods worth 321,045 roubles.⁷⁶

The fairly regular commerce with towns in Xinjiang revived the once lively Russian ties with the region at the time of the Dzungar Khanate. The extant customs records in Semipalatinsk show that trade with Kuldja, Chuguchak and Aqsu had more than doubled in ten years (from 1803 on). Russian goods leaving Semipalatinsk in 1803 were worth 69,606 roubles in silver, those in 1812 as much as 112,547 roubles, and 141,817 roubles in 1821.

Russian caravans carried hides and leather, broadcloth and furs (fox paws), iron and copper utensils (jugs, pots, and trivets), boxes and tin-bound chests, hoes, mirrors, and other domestic tools and implements. These wares were exchanged for silk and cotton fabrics (chiefly coarse calico), and a quantity of black and green tea packed in glass jars or in silk-wrapped or reed-bound wooden chests.

Initially the right of trading with Russian and other caravans visiting Xinjiang from Kazakhstan and Central Asia belonged exclusively to the local Qing authorities. They took all incoming goods for the treasury, offering in exchange cotton fabrics which they got from the

tributary people of Kashgaria, or silks produced at the official manufactories in Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Nanjing. With private Chinese merchants gaining a stronger grip on the region, the authorities—though retaining precedence and control over the caravan trade—allowed them a share of the commerce, at first on only a small scale. And since the Qing officials sought to acquire the best goods at the lowest possible prices, merchants from Central Asia and Kazakhstan were compelled to resort to stratagems. In the mid-1830s, the Xinjiang authorities decided to let Chinese merchants trade freely (without the participation of the treasury) with incoming caravans at Chuguchak. By the mid-1840s this practice was extended to Kuldja, where customs duties were imposed on the bartered goods.

The concessions made to the Chinese merchants in Xinjiang did not, however, affect the Russian caravans, which were still harassed by the police and the local authorities. On the border, the caravans—people and goods—were minutely inspected by the Qing border officials. Detailed descriptions of the merchandise had to be drawn up, and the caravans could not proceed before the superior officials studied the list of goods and issued permission. On arriving at their destination, the goods were stored in customs warehouses or a caravanserai, while the people were put up in special premises under close police surveillance.

N.I. Liubimov, who visited Chuguchak and Kuldja in 1845, referred to the splendid prospects for Russian trade in Xinjiang, notably Kashgaria, where Russian manufactured goods (especially cotton fabrics) were in high demand. 'With affairs as they are at present,' Liubimov wrote, 'everything depends on the indulgence of the local Chinese authorities, or rather their arbitrary conduct: nothing is definite or lawful, and a Chinese customs official who today receives a merchant amicably may the very next day for some personal reasons, with no lawful cause, have him put in stocks, even whipped, of which there have been a few cases.'⁷⁷

These unfavourable conditions were among the main reasons for the slow growth of trade in Xinjiang in the 1820s and 1830s. The value of the average annual shipments from Semipalatinsk to China, Kokand, and the Kirghiz steppelands was 504,307 roubles in 1826-1830, and only a little more—584,622 roubles—in 1831-1835.⁷⁸ Later, the picture changed with the growth of the share of manufactured goods—cotton fabrics and metal articles—in Russian exports. In 1836-1840, the annual shipments of Russian goods to China, Kokand and the Kirghiz steppe averaged 950,214 roubles.

The shipments of Chinese goods to Semipalatinsk were valued differently in different years (in banknotes)—an annual average of 768,180 roubles in 1826-1830, and an annual average of only 659,732 roubles in 1836-1840. The decline of Chinese exports from

Xinjiang was evidently caused by the high customs duty—as much as 8 per cent of the value of goods exchanged from the Russians and other foreign traders—exactd by Qing officials.

Increasingly, Chinese merchants paid for Russian manufactured goods in tea. As seen from the customs records in Semipalatinsk, a little over 936 poods (a Russian measure of weight equivalent to 16.8 kg) of tea was brought in 1837; over 1,062 poods in 1838, over 1,722 poods in 1839, and as much as 2,304 poods in 1840. By 1840, indeed, the share of tea in Chinese exports amounted to more than one-third.

But well into the mid-19th century, Russian caravan trade with Chuguchak, Kuldja and Aqsu was by and large insignificant, owing to the unfavourable conditions created by Manchu officials in Xinjiang.

There was lively barter between Russian merchants, chiefly of Biisk *uyezd*, and the Mongolian population at Mongol guard-posts in the vicinity of Kosh-agach on the Chuya river. Here, in an open space, Russians built log houses to live in and to store their goods. They chose the place because of the fine pastures and meadows for their beasts of burden and their marketable cattle. The wares offered by the Russian traders were chiefly broadcloth, cotton fabrics, and ironware. These were brought by pack-horses which, as a rule, carried not more than 15 poods each. In exchange, the Mongolians offered brick tea, tobacco, nankeen, calico, and certain artifacts like pipes, tobacco-boxes, fancy knives, and so on, which they had exchanged or taken on commission from Chinese merchants settled in Kobdo. The unofficial trading between Russians and Mongolians at Kosh-agach perturbed the Chinese officials, who feared the Russian influence on Mongolians.

Though the Qing authorities evaded contacts with Russia, the Russian government worked on for amicable ties based on equality and mutual advantage. In the instruction to N.I. Liubimov, who was going to visit the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing in 1840, Nikolai I stressed, among other things, that 'trade with China is the most important object and, one may say, the chief purpose of our political actions in relation to that country'.⁷⁹

Russia's amicable, good-neighbour policy towards China was clearly evident in the matter of the opium trade. After Yang Haizong, a Chinese resident of Urga, apprehended by the authorities for opium-smoking, testified falsely that he had obtained the drug from a certain Russian in Kiachta, the Urga *amban* ordered the *dzarguchei* in Maimaicheng to ask the Russian border commissioner, P.A. Petukhov, for an explanation. A thorough inquiry at the Kiachta customs established that no opium had been sold in 1838 or 1839, much less priorly, and that no Russian by the name given by

Yang Haizong ever came to Kiachta. On 5 December 1839, Petukhov apprised the Qing border administration accordingly.

When the Manchu emperor issued a second edict banning the sale and smoking of opium, Petukhov ordered the Kiachta customs to see to it that 'opium should on no account be an object of trade by Russians in Kiachta'. He added that 'there should even be no mention or sign of it in commercial relations with the Chinese'.⁸⁰

Part II

THE PENETRATION OF CAPITALIST POWERS INTO CHINA. THE PEASANT WARS AND THE RISINGS OF NON-HAN PEOPLES

Chapter 3

BRITAIN'S AGGRESSIVE POLICY IN CHINA AND THE FIRST OPIUM WAR 1840-1842

In the mid-19th century, Britain was the leading colonial power in the Far East, notably in China. The rapid growth of its industries following the industrial revolution had also had repercussions for its colonies: they had become an important source of raw materials and a lucrative outlet for British goods. Indeed, the China market had long since attracted the attention of the British bourgeoisie. The economic, political, and military weakness of the Qing Empire inspired the British capitalists' hope that it would be relatively easy to subjugate it.

Qing Authorities Oppose Opium Trade

The British government used the conflict over the Manchu court's decision to stop the contraband opium trade and ban opium smoking as a pretext for war.

Not foreigners alone, but also influential Manchu-Chinese dignitaries and Guangdong officials corrupted by the all-pervasive "squeeze" had a stake in the opium contraband. So did the local merchants, whose gains from the narcotic trade were fabulously high. In 1836, Xu Naiji, a Guangdong official, suggested legalising the opium trade and imposing a customs duty equivalent to that for medicines. Instead of paying silver for opium he suggested barter. He also advised cultivating the cheap opium poppy at home to compete with the expensive imported drug.¹

The opium trade and opium smoking, which had grown into a national calamity, perturbed and worried many highly-placed people of the Chinese feudal hierarchy.

A group of Chinese officials and scholars, including Huang Juezi, Wei Yuan, Gong Zizhen and Lin Zexu, opposed the trade in opium. There were also many opponents of the opium trade among local

officials and the *shenshi* gentry. The advocates of an effective opium ban showed mounting concern over the destructive effects of the drug on the physical condition and morale of the Chinese nation, and the painful economic consequences of the outflow of silver abroad. On 2 June 1838, in a memorial to the emperor, court official Huang Juezi pleaded for outlawing the sale and smoking of opium.² The emperor responded by ordering the viceroys and governors of several provinces to discuss Huang's suggestions with local officials and to present their recommendations. Among the memorials to the court, that of Lin Zexu (1775-1850), viceroy of Hunan and Hubei, was the most trenchant: it listed a number of specific measures that could be taken to combat the opium trade and opium smoking. Advocates of radical steps, including Lin Zexu, suggested introducing the death penalty for selling or smoking the harmful drug.³

Lin Zexu, whose name is associated with the measures taken to fight opium, was an enlightened member of the ruling feudal elite. Calling for the nation's revival through economic and social reforms, he urged learning from the West and using Western scientific and technical knowledge. He was aware that knowledge of the political and economic situation in Western lands was essential to assess their strength and weaknesses. He was a foe of the conservative Chinese isolationism and a supporter of mutually profitable foreign trade. But as a member of the feudal elite, he was unable to rise above the hidebound Confucian tenets and the long isolation of China from the outside world.

In 1838, as viceroy of Hunan and Hubei, Lin went out of his way to enforce the ban on the sale and smoking of opium. In Wuchang, Hankou, and other cities of the two provinces opium, opium pipes, and other accessories of opium smoking were made subject to confiscation. Lin wrote memorials on the harmful effects that opium had for all strata of Chinese society and described the measures he had taken to stop opium smoking. In one memorial he called the emperor's attention to the need for rooting out opium smoking throughout the country. On 31 December 1838 the emperor issued an edict appointing him imperial commissioner in Guangdong province with broad powers to investigate and fight the contraband opium trade.⁴

On 10 March 1839, Lin Zexu arrived in Guangzhou. As a first step he drew up lists of all the opium dens in Guangdong and of all Chinese opium merchants. Then he ordered the confiscation of the opium in the possession of foreign smugglers, because most of the opium was stored on foreign ships and in foreign warehouses. On 18 March, Lin announced to Chinese and foreign merchants that all opium in the province or on ships in Chinese waters was to be

turned over to the local authorities. For each chest of confiscated opium Lin offered foreign merchants a compensation of 5 *jin* of tea leaves.

Lin required all foreign merchants to sign a pledge that they would not bring opium to China. Meanwhile, foreign trading was temporarily suspended. Foreign merchants in Guangzhou were not permitted to leave the city until they had turned in their opium stocks. Any communication between foreigners and the local population was prohibited.⁵ Chinese employees and servants were told to leave the foreign factories, which were blockaded on Lin's orders from 23 March. On the following day, the superintendent of British trade in China, Charles Elliot, arrived in Guangzhou from Macao. Under Lin's pressure he was compelled to concede ground and order British merchants to surrender their opium.

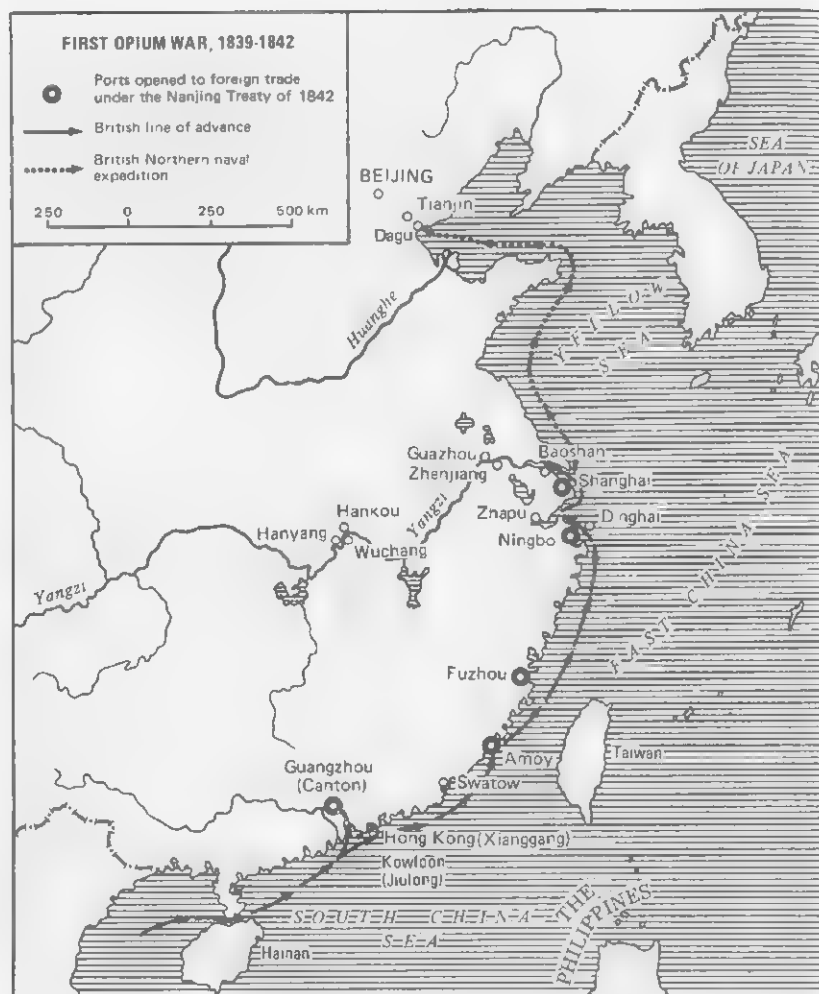
In April 1839, in a message to Queen Victoria, Lin Zexu announced the ban on the smoking of opium in China and demanded that its manufacture be stopped in Britain and lands under its rule.⁶

The opium was turned in on Humen (the Bogue; a fortified island on the Zhujiang). Destruction of the confiscated opium was begun on Lin's orders on 3 June 1839. Most of it was dumped into pits filled with salt water and covered with quicklime. The rest was burned. By 25 June 1839, as many as 19,179 chests and 2,119 bales of opium weighing 2,376,254 *jin*⁷ (over 1,188 tonnes) were thus destroyed. After surrendering the opium, all British subjects, with Elliot at their head, left Guangzhou for Macao.

Lin Zexu published a set of rules for the inspection of foreign merchant vessels entering the waters of Guangdong province. Only those ships that had no opium on board were to be allowed to trade.

An incident in Jiulong (Kowloon) on 7 July 1839 made an already tense situation still more strained. That day a group of British seamen started a fight and wounded several Chinese, one of whom soon succumbed to his wounds. Charles Elliot, who acted as chief judge, staged a trial of the culprits. Five seamen were to pay insignificant fines and to serve several months in gaol on returning to Britain. The Guangdong authorities demanded that the trial should be held in a Chinese court, because the murder was committed on Chinese soil. Elliot rejected the demand. So on 15 August Lin ordered Chinese servants employed by the British to stay away. He also ordered a boycott of British goods, and cut off the supply of provisions to the British. So ten days later the British boarded their ships in Macao and sailed for the open sea.

Outbreak of War with Britain



Map 3

The British bourgeoisie took advantage of the confiscation of contraband opium in Guangdong to exert pressure on their government to send a military expedition to China. Some 300 trading firms of Manchester, London, Leeds, Liverpool, Blackburn and Bristol connected with the textile industry had agents and goods in Guangzhou. They wanted Lord Palmerston, Britain's Foreign Secretary, to intervene immediately.

British merchants in China acted still more vigorously. Soon after the opium confiscation they sent spokesmen to Britain to prevail on the government to require a compensation from the Chinese equivalent to the cost of the destroyed opium (\$20,000,000). On 26 October 1839, William Jardine, owner of one of the biggest foreign companies in China, Jardine and Matheson, outlined to Palmerston his plan of an armed blockade of key Chinese ports, coupled with diplomatic pressure requiring the Qing court to 1) apologise for the insults inflicted on British subjects in Guangzhou, 2) pay a compensation for the opium confiscated by Lin Zexu from British merchants, 3) conclude a commercial treaty with Britain, 4) open four seaports to external trade—Fuzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai, and Jiaozhou. British troops, he suggested, should occupy Amoy and the islands of Zhoushan until the Chinese side accepted these terms. In addition, the Qing were to give the British Empire possession of the island of Hongkong or some other island or harbour in the vicinity of Guangzhou for use as a trading base. The opium trader's plan served as a blueprint for Palmerston's subsequent moves in China.⁸

To begin with, the British public was being attuned to a war with China. In late 1839 and early 1840 the London press published reports of atrocities perpetrated against British subjects in China, of insults to the British flag, and of how British traders and Captain Charles Elliot had allegedly been kept in detention in Guangzhou on bread and water.

In the meantime, the British in China began provoking armed incidents. On 4 September 1839, a battle between British warships and Chinese junks occurred near Jiulong Peninsula. The first shot was fired from the British ship *Pearl*. On 3 November, there was an armed clash between British and Chinese vessels at Chuanbi in the Zhujiang estuary.⁹ On 26 November, on receiving word of the incidents, the Qing emperor issued an edict stopping all trade with the British as from 5 January 1840 (in fact it was stopped on 5 December 1839).

While engaging in ceaseless minor clashes, the two sides began preparing for an all-out war. Lin Zexu and his lieutenants strengthened

the shore defences of Guangdong and readied the foot army. Forts and other fortifications were hastily repaired. Lin took advantage of the conflicting interests of the Western states to buy 200 guns from Americans and Portuguese. Some sixty rice junks were turned into war vessels. It was in Lin's book to use purely Chinese means of attack and defence. Twenty large and more than a hundred small fireboats (junks and wooden rafts loaded with brushwood, straw and other inflammables) were constructed. At the narrow points along the Zhujiang piles were driven into the river-bed from bank to bank, and bound with chains. Concealed beneath the surface of the water, they were to halt any passage of British warships. These ruses had been used by the Chinese since times immemorial. To reinforce his navy, Lin enlisted some 5,000 volunteers from among local fishermen and pearl divers, and to back up the foot soldiers he gathered a militia of Guangdong peasants and townsmen. Funds for these measures were culled from local resources and donations of the local rich.¹⁰ The central authorities allocated nothing for the defence of the country's southern regions.

The campaign against the opium traffic continued unabated. In January 1840, Lin Zexu issued an order banishing all British merchants engaged in opium contraband from the Qing Empire. He also required all goods belonging to British subjects to be immediately shipped out of all Chinese ports.

Defying this stern order, many of the British merchantmen remained in Chinese territorial waters under the protection of warships, and bartered opium for local goods and foodstuffs. On 15 January 1840, Lin drew up a second message to the British queen, repeating that a strict law had been promulgated in China forbidding the opium traffic practised by foreign merchants. The message contained a warning that if Britain wished to do commerce with China it should forever renounce the criminal trade in opium.¹¹

In January 1840, Queen Victoria declared in her speech at the opening of Parliament that the British government was in sympathy with the actions of Captain Charles Elliot and the British merchants in China. Following the Queen's approval, Lord Palmerston no longer hesitated to start hostilities against China, though he had no such powers under British law. In March 1840, a military expedition headed by Admiral George Elliot (cousin of Charles Elliot), commander of the British fleet in India, sailed from Britain for the China coast. Palmerston supplied the expedition with two official documents—a note to the Qing government, and an instruction to the British commanders. The expedition was ordered to blockade the estuary of the Zhujiang and to tender a copy of the note to the local authorities, to occupy the Zhoushan islands and there tender local officials a second copy of the note. Thereupon, it was to despatch

a squadron of ships to the Baihe estuary near Tianjin (Tientsin) and tender a third copy of the note for transmission to the Qing government. This was to lead up to the signing of an Anglo-Chinese treaty on terms contained in the note. If the Chinese turned down any of the terms, the squadron would blockade the chief ports along the China coast.¹²

Strong though the influence of the war party was in Britain, the Whig government's aggressive moves encountered strong public opposition. Seeking to gain political capital and undermine the prestige of the ruling party, the Tories attacked the government's policy in China. Unlike the House of Lords, which unanimously backed Palmerston's course, the Commons saw an acrimonious three-day debate (7 to 9 April 1840), with Palmerston's policy winning approval by a narrow majority of only 271 to 262 votes.

The Chartists, the foremost spokesmen of the British working class, condemned the colonialist actions of the government, and protested against the 'poison smugglers' war' in China. In an open letter to Palmerston in *The Northern Star*, they showed the predatory nature of the war and dissociated themselves from the policy of colonial seizures in China. They said the people of Britain wanted no part in this unjust war of conquest.¹³

The first ship of the British armed expedition reached China waters on 9 June 1840. By the end of the month there were as many as 16 ships with 540 guns, four steamers converted for naval action, and 28 transports. By that time British troops in China totalled some 4,000 men.¹⁴ The expeditionary force blockaded the Zhujiang estuary, but refrained from active military operations. On 30 June, the British fleet departed from Guangdong waters, leaving behind four warships and one steamer to blockade Guangzhou, and sailed north. In the morning of 4 July it reached the Zhoushan islands. The local authorities were ordered to surrender Dinghai, the administrative seat of the archipelago. There was no reply, and the British sank a lot of Chinese war junks, landed their troops, and captured the city after a short battle against the nearly 2,000 strong Manchu garrison. Plunder and carnage followed. Karl Marx referred with genuine anger to the behaviour of the British invaders in China during the First Opium War. He wrote: 'At that time the English soldiery perpetrated infamous crimes for the mere fun of it; the soldiers' licentiousness was neither sanctified by religious fanaticism nor heightened by the hatred against the presumptuous conquerors nor spurred by any unbending resistance of a heroic enemy. Violation of women, impaling of children, and gutting of whole villages were then licentious amusements reported not by the mandarins but by British officers themselves.'¹⁵

On receiving word of the fall of Dinghai, the emperor dismissed

a few of his officials, hastily replacing them with others. Wuergene, the Manchu governor of Zhejiang (Chekiang) province, with jurisdiction over the Zhoushan islands, was thrown out of office, while Yilibu, viceroy of Jiangsu, Jiangxi, and Anhui, was appointed imperial commissioner to investigate the reasons for the fall of Dinghai. An edict was issued ordering the reinforcement of shore defences.¹⁶

On 28 July 1840, the British sailed from the Zhoushan islands, leaving behind a small naval force and garrison in Dinghai. A squadron of eight ships sailed north, blockading all seaports along the way.¹⁷ On 9 August, it entered the Baihe estuary, and on 11 August anchored several kilometres off Tianjin. On 16 August, the British commander handed Palmerston's note to the Qing government through local Chinese officials, setting a ten-day deadline for an official reply.

Britain's demands were: 1) compensation for the opium confiscated from British merchants in Guangdong, 2) repayment of the debt which the Cohong had incurred with British merchants over the years, 3) satisfaction for the affront inflicted on Captain Charles Elliot, Britain's representative in China, by the Guangdong authorities, 4) cession of one or more islands on the coast (to be selected by the British), 5) compensation for the expense of the British military expedition to China.

Anglo-Chinese Negotiations in Guangzhou and Renewal of Hostilities

The appearance of the British naval squadron in the immediate vicinity of the imperial capital and the terms of Palmerston's ultimatum threw Emperor Mian Ning (reign title Daoguang) and his court into a state of confusion with a lasting effect on the subsequent policies of the Qing. The emperor's retinue inclined him persistently to a policy of concessions and compromises.

There was nothing close to consensus among the ruling elite concerning the war that had, in effect, broken out with Britain, as there had been none over the opium problem. The supporters of resistance included patriotic statesmen, scholars, officials, and *shenshi*, but they also included such extreme reactionaries as Yan Botao, viceroy of Zhejiang and Fujian, and a rabid enemy of all things foreign, the Mongol Yu Qian, viceroy of Jiangsu, Jiangxi, and Anhui, who wanted China's isolation from the outer world preserved, and others. The camp was anything but united, and its influence on the emperor's policy insignificant.

The supporters of surrender to the British were strong at the court, in Beijing, and among the top echelon of army commanders. Among them was the chief of the Military Council, the Manchu

Muzhana, who was the emperor's closest lieutenant, and the viceroy of Zhili province, the Manchu Qi Shan. Defeatism also reigned among members of the imperial family. Manchu noblemen Yi Shan, Yi Jing, Qi Ying, Yilibu, and others, were in favour of surrender, too. Besides, the advocates of surrender were backed by officials in the capital, and by provincial officials and merchants associated with the opium traffic. While those who favoured resistance were mostly Chinese, those who were prepared to surrender belonged for the most part to the Manchu aristocracy. For the Manchus, indeed, the chief enemy was the people of China, for they feared, and not without cause, that it was liable at any moment to rise against the alien ruling dynasty. In shaping policy, they were guided by the principle that 'the danger originated not from outside, but lurked inside' and that 'defence against the people superseded defence against the bandits' (i.e., the British).¹⁸

This attitude of the Muzhana party affected the policy of the Qing, which may be described as a series of concessions and compromises that culminated in China's complete surrender. It was initiated at the talks between Qi Shan and the British commanders, which began on 30 August 1840. The Qing emperor was prepared to meet all the terms set in Palmerston's note, excepting two—the one requiring the reimbursement of the cost of the opium destroyed in Guangdong, and that of turning over into British possession of a Chinese island. Maintaining that the circumstances of the conflict should be examined on the spot, Qi Shan suggested transferring the negotiations to Guangdong province. The British agreed, and on 15 September their ships left the Gulf of Zhili, sailing south.

But even before the talks were renewed in Guangzhou, the Dragon Throne made far-reaching concessions. Under pressure of the Muzhana party, the emperor issued orders that were completely contrary to his own recent edicts. Hoping that resumption of Anglo-Chinese trade would help settle the conflict with Britain, he issued an edict to that effect on 4 September.¹⁹ On 17 September this was followed by an edict prohibiting viceroys and governors of maritime provinces to open fire on British ships. On the same day, the emperor appointed Qi Shan commissioner to investigate the reasons and circumstances of the conflict in Guangdong, and dismissed Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen from office. This succession of imperial edicts was crowned by the appointment of Qi Shan viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in place of Lin Zexu, who was ordered to remain in Guangzhou until the facts of the conflict were established. In November, the emperor lifted the ban on the opium trade, motivating this by the specious pronouncement that an end had been put to the use of drugs in China for good.

At the talks with the British in Guangzhou, Qi Shan agreed to let

Anglo-Chinese commerce resume, and consented to reimburse the cost of the opium confiscated from British merchants. But he would not let the British have the island of Hong Kong.

On 7 January 1841, the British broke off the negotiations and attacked and captured important Chinese fortifications on the Zhujiang. Thereupon, Qi Shan requested Charles Elliot to stop the hostilities and renew the talks. This culminated in the conclusion of the Chuanbi convention of 20 January, with the imperial commissioner accepting all the terms set by the British. Under the agreement of Chuanbi, China undertook 1) to cede to Britain the island and harbour of Hong Kong, 2) to pay British merchants for the confiscated opium the sum of 6,000,000 dollars, 3) to guarantee equitable relations between the two countries, and 4) to open the port of Guangzhou to foreign trade. In return, the British promised to withdraw their troops from Dinghai.²⁰

But the copy of the agreement submitted by Qi Shan to the Beijing court said only that the British would be allowed to settle in Hong Kong and to use it as a trading base. The article on repaying the cost of the confiscated opium was omitted altogether, and the third article was given in just general outline.

In the meantime the Qing emperor had received Qi Shan's memorial about the British attack of 7 January 1841 on fortified islands on the Zhujiang, and officially declared war on Britain on 29 January. On 1 February, he issued an edict appointing his nephew Yi Shan imperial commissioner and commander in Guangdong, to be aided by generals Lung Wen and Yang Fang.

Qi Shan had concealed the cession of Hong Kong to the British not only from the central government, but also from the Guangdong authorities. On 26 January 1841, before the Chuanbi convention was ratified, British troops occupied Hong Kong. On 1 February, Charles Elliot and G. Bremer, the successor of Admiral George Elliot, who had fallen sick, addressed themselves to the population of the island, informing them that henceforth they were the subjects of the British Queen and were obliged to obey her officials. The excited populace sent the address to the governor of Guangdong province, Yi Liang, who immediately informed the emperor of Qi Shan's secret cession of Hong Kong.²¹

On 26 February, when word of this reached Beijing, the emperor ordered 'to strip Qi Shan immediately of all titles and of his office, and to bring him to Beijing in chains for the strictest possible trial'.²² On 12 March 1841, Qi Shan was taken from Guangzhou to the capital under guard. In July, he was sentenced to death, with the execution to be carried out at the end of autumn. But it never took place. In April 1843, the emperor annulled the sentence of death and appointed Qi Shan commander of Manchu troops in Rehe. The

Chuanbi convention was never ratified, for the court considered the British demands exorbitant.

Following the Qing declaration of war, hostilities unfolded in the territory of Guangdong province (Map 3). The British again blockaded the estuary of the Zhujiang, and began energetically priming for combat. On 24 and 25 February, all British ships stationed near the Zhoushan islands lifted anchor and sailed south to Guangdong. On 25 February, before they had arrived, British troops in Guangdong attacked fortifications and forts along the Zhujiang, and quickly captured them. All Chinese guns, including the foreign cannon bought by Lin Zexu, fell into British hands. A large number of Chinese soldiers and officers were killed in battle, and notably Admiral Guan Tianpei, commander of the Guangdong fleet.²³ The British took possession of strategically crucial points along the Zhujiang, clearing the way to Guangzhou. On 27 February, they seized the fortifications at the approaches to the city, and entered the grounds of the foreign factories,²⁴ raising the British flag there.

Yang Fang, terrified by the rapid developments outside the walls of the city, hastened to order resumption of foreign trade in Guangdong on 20 March 1841.

The British suspended hostilities and, availing themselves of the cease-fire, sent G. Bremer to India for reinforcements and further instructions.²⁵ Some of the British warships withdrew to Hong Kong, the others remained in the Zhujiang, at Humen, and under their protection British merchants renewed their opium traffic.

On 14 April 1841, commander Yi Shan arrived in Guangzhou with his second assistant, Long Wen, and on 3 May, obeying the emperor's orders, Lin Zexu departed from Guangdong. The province was in turmoil. The British victories and the setbacks of the government troops had aroused the people. Besides, there were frequent clashes between the troops brought in as reinforcements from other provinces, the local troops, and the civilian population. The regular Qing army massed in Guangdong was not ready for combat.²⁶ Still, in the evening of 21 May, without any serious preparations, following Yi Shan's orders, Chinese coastal batteries opened fire on British ships and sent blazing fireships in their direction. The British warded off the attack with relative ease. On 24 May, a British landing party came ashore. For the first time in the war, the expeditionary troops neglected the protection of ships' guns to come into direct contact with the Chinese population. The Qing generals had had no operational plan. More, on encountering enemy resistance, they surrendered the initiative.

The British landing party was small, and had a limited store of ammunition. But on 25 May, instead of trying to force the British out of the fortifications they had captured, Yi Shan ordered all

his troops defending the approaches to Guangzhou to withdraw into the city, and to close the city gates. Fearing treason, he ordered no one to be allowed in or out of the city under pain of death. This gave the British an opportunity to seize strategically important points round Guangzhou with little or no opposition. Meanwhile, disturbances broke out in the city where, in addition to its population of some 500,000, there were refugees from neighbouring localities and a large concentration of troops. On 26 May, Yi Shan sent the prefect of Guangzhou, Yu Baochun, to contact the British and request an armistice.

The armistice, which has gone down in history as the Ransom of Guangzhou, was signed on 27 May. The terms were dictated by the British: 1) within six days of the signing of the armistice, the imperial commissioners and the troops that had come to Guangdong from other provinces were to withdraw from Guangzhou to a distance of 60 *li*; 2) within a week, as from 27 May, the Chinese were to pay the British reparations of 6,000,000 dollars, with the first million payable before sundown of the same day; 3) following fulfilment of these two clauses of the agreement, British troops would withdraw from the captured fortifications in Guangdong, including the fort at Humen.²⁷

Though the armistice was signed on terms highly beneficial for the British, their position in Guangdong was anything but favourable. On 27 May, the expeditionary troops landed around Guangzhou numbered a mere 2,200 men,²⁸ while a nearly 20,000-strong Qing army²⁹ was massed within the city walls, backed by a patriotic populace and a good knowledge of local terrain and conditions. Indeed, the British did not venture into the unknown land to any appreciable distance from their ships and the protection of the ships' guns in fear of being captured or destroyed. In Guangdong as on the Zhoushan islands they were bedevilled by diseases, which kept reducing the already small number of able-bodied British troops in China. This and the drooping morale of the soldiers, coupled with the enmity of the people of Guangdong, prompted the hasty consent of the British to an armistice.

On 28 May, the day after the Ransom of Guangzhou, the state of siege was lifted and the city gates opened. Yi Shan and his assistants issued a manifesto calling on the people of the province not to resist the British, and permitting to resume trade with foreigners. In the days that followed, the provincial authorities would issue a succession of similar statements.³⁰ The contacts which the British troops had with the defenceless local population were punctuated by plunder and violence.³¹

The Patriotic Resistance of the People of Guangdong

The civilian population of Guangdong was angered by the unruly behaviour of the British troops, the defeatist policy of the provincial authorities, and the impassive attitude of the Qing army. During the fighting in May 1841 the populace had helped the regular troops to defend the approaches to Guangzhou. At the end of May, the patriotic *shenshi* gentry gathered in the village of Niulangang (on the border of Nanhai and Panyu counties) and decided to marshal an armed force to fight the British invaders. A plan of action was drawn up. Then the patriots returned to their villages to raise a militia, and to teach volunteers the art of war.³²

The most conspicuous event in the patriotic struggle during the First Opium War was the armed action of the *pingyingtuan* (units for the suppression of the British) on 30-31 May 1841 a few kilometres north of Guangzhou. The immediate cause of the action was the pillage visited by British soldiers on the village of Sanyuanli on 29 May. On the following day, the incensed populace reinforced by people from neighbouring villages and armed with spears, swords, hoes, and staves, converged on the fort of Sifang, where the British landing party had its headquarters. The patriots lured an enemy unit out of the fort, and then managed to surround it in the vicinity of Niulangang village. Fighting broke out, which lasted all that day. Only after nightfall did the British finally manage to break out of the encirclement and to return to their camp.³³ All night the Guangdong patriots kept the fort under watch. In the morning of 31 May, they again tried to engage the British. But the British command had set the city authorities an ultimatum, demanding that the siege be lifted. Local officials headed by the prefect managed to disperse the angry populace.

The action of 30-31 May was mounted by just a few thousand people from 103 neighbouring villages. But it had a far-reaching effect on the further patriotic movement in Guangdong. Other armed clashes broke out between British units and the civilian population elsewhere in the vicinity of Guangzhou.

The time of the armistice ran out on 1 June. By then the Chinese authorities had, in the main, fulfilled the conditions of the agreement. British ships began their withdrawal from Guangzhou, completing it on 7 June 1841.

The people of Guangdong did not lay down their arms after the British troops had withdrawn. In the latter half of 1841 and in 1842, making good use of the peaceful atmosphere in the province, they bolstered its defences and prepared for any fight that may ensue with the British colonialists. There was a marked consolidation of

provincial patriotic forces; they were grouped round the rural *shexue* (community school administrations) and formed militia units to defend the province against the external enemy.

The rural *shexue*, which became widespread in China under the Ming and Qing, were designed to bring up the rising generations in the Confucian spirit, and to keep the millions upon millions of peasants under ideological control. In addition to its educational function, the *shexue* was a kind of club of the educated feudal gentry, the venue of *shenshi* meetings, assemblies and social functions.

There was a visible expansion of the sphere of activity of the *shexue* under the Qing. They often served as courts of arbitration between neighbours, and in some parts of the country initiated the formation of local markets, repair and building of roads and bridges, irrigation schemes, and the like. The *shexue* functioned on the voluntary contributions of the populace. They had their own land, the so-called school fields, which was usually leased to tenant farmers. Control of the *shexue* was firmly in the hands of the local *shenshi* gentry.

In the summer of 1841, the *Shengping shexue* (the community school administration of the Creation of the World) took the lead in the patriotic struggle of the villages north of Guangzhou.³⁴ Following suit, other Guangdong *shexue* joined the patriotic movement. Special organisations were set up in some parts of Guangzhou area with the specific purpose of repulsing invaders. In July 1841, for example, the *Dongping gongshe* (the Society of Eastern Peace) was formed north-east of Guangzhou.³⁵ This and the other organisations taking part in the patriotic struggle were grouped round the *Shengping shexue*.

In short, starting in the summer of 1841, the people of Guangdong had begun preparing for combat. But subsequently the hostilities shifted to Fujian and Zhejiang provinces in the basin of the Yangzi, far from Guangdong. The *shexue* were active after the signing of the peace treaty, under which Guangzhou was listed as one of five ports open for foreign trade.

The Fighting in East China and the Lower Reaches of the Yangzi

Mistaking the lull in hostilities in the summer of 1841 for the end of the war, the Dragon Throne made no plans whatever for any further operations. Neither did it go to the trouble of buttressing defences in the maritime provinces. More, the emperor issued an edict withdrawing from Guangdong the regular troops brought there from other localities.³⁶ Similar orders followed for Fujian and

Zhejiang. Anglo-Chinese trading was resumed by imperial sanction. Though neither the Qing nor Queen Victoria had ratified the Chuanbi convention, the British continued to hold Hong Kong, and on 7 June 1841 declared it a free port.

The British government, which was displeased with the terms of the convention and with Captain Charles Elliot's conduct of affairs, repudiated it on 30 April 1841, and recalled the superintendent, appointing Sir Henry Pottinger in his place. The new plenipotentiary, who was also commander of the British expeditionary force in China, arrived to assume his post on 10 August, along with Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker, who had been put in command of British naval forces in the China seas. Pottinger brought fresh instructions from Palmerston, envisaging the shifting of military operations to the basin of the Yangzi, renewed occupation of the Zhoushan islands, and either capture of strategically important points on the Yangzi or an offensive in the north, thrusting into the Baihe valley. Not until this plan was accomplished should any peace negotiations be opened with the Qing government. The talks should proceed until the Chinese met all British demands.³⁷

The Tory government under Robert Peel, which came to power in the summer of 1841, went back on its former opposition to the war in China. It lost no time, in fact, to send additional troops. It was planned by the British, first of all, to seize the lower reaches of the Yangzi river. This would give them control over all traffic along that important Chinese waterway and the Grand Canal, which crossed the Yangzi at Zhenjiang and connected Central and South China with the North, serving as the main artery for shipments of food and other goods to the imperial capital.

Following the arrival of Pottinger, British troops began to thrust deeper inland. From August 1841 to May 1842 there was fighting in the provinces of Fujian and Zhejiang. On 22 August 1841, leaving a small garrison in Hong Kong, the British squadron sailed north and approached Amoy on 25 August. The British demanded that the authorities surrender the forts girdling the city, threatening seizure by assault if they did not comply. On the following day, before receiving any Chinese reply, the British attacked. The Chinese troops returned fire. But the battle was short. The defenders suffered large casualties.³⁸ Under cover of darkness, Yan Botao, the viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang, led his troops out of the city. In the morning of 27 August, the British entered Amoy, meeting no resistance but that of the people of near-by villages.

At the end of September 1841, the British took the fortifications on the Zhoushan archipelago, and on 1 October again entered Dinghai. Zhenhai fell on 10 October, and Ningbo three days later. The day before the British came, the military commanders and

civil authorities of Ningbo took to their heels, abandoning the city to the tender mercies of the enemy. The British chose Ningbo as their winter quarters. Meanwhile, the people of the three occupied cities launched a patriotic struggle under the guidance of the Heishuidang, the Black Waters secret society.³⁹

Learning of the resumption of hostilities in August 1841, the Manchu emperor ordered troops from the provinces of Jiangxi, Hubei, Anhui, Sichuan, Henan, Shenxi, and Gansu to be moved to Zhejiang in all haste, and appointed his nephew, Yi Jing, commander-in-chief.⁴⁰ To assist his armies, Yi Jing enlisted more than 20,000 volunteers, chiefly fishermen and villagers. The Qing commanders massed their troops in the province of Zhejiang, and for the first time sat down to draw up an operational plan for a simultaneous assault on the cities of Dinghai, Ningbo, and Zhenhai. But the operation ended in complete failure.⁴¹

On 15 March 1842, the British counter-attacked, moving up the Yangzi. Shortly before, Liu Yunhe, governor of Zhejiang province, memorialised the emperor, urging him to open peace negotiations. He held that this was China's only hope, and asked for Yilibu, the Manchu, to be despatched to Zhejiang for this purpose.⁴² Liu was expressing the sentiment of the defeatist party, which had become more and more vociferous after the setbacks in Zhejiang. But the British were not yet ready to terminate the hostilities. They counted on a series of offensive operations to seize strategically important points along the Yangzi before opening negotiations. This was to make the Qing more pliable and more inclined to accept the terms of the treaty the British were planning to impose.

British troops continued capturing towns in the lower reaches of the Yangzi. On 18 May, their ships approached the town of Zhapu, where a large Manchu army was concentrated. To the surprise of the British, the defenders rendered strong resistance. But though well armed, the Manchu garrison proved unable to hold out. A large number of soldiers and officers who did not wish to be taken prisoner, committed suicide.⁴³ On 16 June, the British attacked Wusong, and captured it in the teeth of resistance by the local garrison under Admiral Chen Huacheng. On 19 June they took Shanghai, on 15 July some ships of the British squadron approached Guazhou at the northern entrance to the Grand Canal, and blockaded it, interrupting the movement of cargoes along that important waterway. On the 21st, a large British force was massed at Zhenjiang, which was blocking its way to Nanjing (Nanking). The local garrison fought gallantly, with nearly all the city's defenders laying down their lives in the unequal battle. Those soldiers and officers who survived, killed their families and committed suicide themselves. Seeing that the battle was lost, General Hai Ling set fire to his

mansion and died in the flames.⁴⁴

In his article, 'The New British Campaign in China', Frederick Engels praised the courage of the defenders of Zhenjiang: 'Had the invaders met with a similar resistance everywhere they never would have reached Nanking. But such was not the case.'⁴⁵

The fall of Zhenjiang, which lay at the crossing of the Yangzi and the Grand Canal paralysed shipping and created a threat to Nanjing. Seeing that the Qing troops were incapable of halting the enemy's advance, the populace of Jiangsu province began priming for battle. As in Guangdong, money was collected to finance defence. But the Qing had no trust in the popular volunteer detachment so formed, fearing that the latter might at any moment turn against the government.⁴⁶

The newly-appointed viceroy of Jiangxi, Jiangsu, and Anhui, by name of Niu Jian, addressed a letter to the British command on 27 July 1842, proposing to end hostilities and begin peace talks. On 1 August, Pottinger gave his consent, stating, however, that the war would go on until the Qing delegated representatives authorised to negotiate.⁴⁷ On 2 August, leaving a nearly 2,000-strong garrison in Zhenjiang, British warships sailed up the Yangzi to Nanjing. The Nanjing garrison numbered some 6,000 men of the regular Qing army. The British demanded a ransom, failing which, they told Niu Jian, they would bombard the former Ming capital. Their threats and show of force completely demoralised the Qing generals and dignitaries. On 8 August, plenipotentiaries of the Qing government, the Manchus Qi Ying and Yilibu, arrived in Nanjing, and peace negotiations began.

The Unequal Treaty of Nanjing and the Opening Up of China

The Anglo-Chinese negotiations ended on 29 August 1842 with the signing of a peace treaty, which has gone down in history as the Treaty of Nanjing, on board the British warship *Cornwallis*.

The Nanjing Treaty, which the British hypocritically called a treaty of peace, friendship, trade, reimbursement of losses, etc., was the first of the unequal treaties subsequently signed by China. It consisted of 13 articles. Article 2 accorded British merchants the right to trade in five ports on the China coast—Guangzhou, Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai, initiating the system of open ports in which the British were allowed to trade without hindrance, to settle and live, and so on. Four of these ports were, indeed, opened: Shanghai on 17 November 1843, Ningbo and Fuzhou in December 1843, and Amoy in June 1844. Guangzhou alone, where the popu-

lace, backed by the people of the entire province of Guangdong, resisted firmly, was not opened to free foreign trade until after the Second Opium War of 1856-1860. Under Article 3, China ceded Hong Kong to Britain 'in perpetuity'. The favourable location of the island near the Zhujiang estuary made it a jumping board for British entrepreneurs seeking to penetrate into the south-eastern provinces of the Qing Empire. In due course, the island grew into an important British commercial and naval base in the Far East. Article 4 obliged China to pay Britain 6,000,000 dollars in compensation for the opium destroyed in Guangdong in 1839, while Article 5 granted British traders the right 'to conduct trade with all persons they may wish', thus officially abolishing the *hong* system. Also, China was to pay Britain another 3,000,000 dollars in payment of the debts some of the *hong* merchants had incurred with British traders, and Article 6 obliged China to pay a war indemnity of 12,000,000 dollars. This item, too, was predatory. Article 10 established restrictions on import and export duties, stripping China of its customs autonomy. Article 11 abolished the usual Chinese rites in dealing between British subjects and Qing officials. Under Article 12 British troops were to stay on the occupied islands of Zhoushan and Gulangxu until China honoured all the other articles of the treaty, and, in particular, until it had paid the indemnities, which amounted to a sum of 21,000,000 dollars. (The British withdrew from Gulangxu in 1845, but the occupation of the Zhoushan islands continued until 1846.)

The question of opium, the confiscation of which Britain had used as a pretext for the war, was deliberately evaded in the Treaty of Nanjing. None of the treaty's 13 articles mentioned the opium trade. But after the war ended, the narcotic remained one of the biggest items of Anglo-Chinese trade. This may be illustrated with the following figures: during the year in which the Nanjing Treaty was signed, 33,508 chests of opium were shipped into China, and 42,699 chests (with about 32 kg in each) the following year.⁴⁸

The Treaty of Nanjing had a tremendous bearing on China's further fate. It paved the way for a series of similar unequal treaties with other Western powers, radically altering the relations they had had with the Qing Empire. The fact that it served as a kind of watershed between China's two systems of foreign relations—the tributary and that governed by treaties—was only one aspect of its role in Chinese history. It opened the doors to foreign, mainly British, capital, and thereby gave the start to China's enslavement by overseas capitalist powers. The breach knocked into China's ages-long isolation was in itself a positive thing. But it had not come as the effect of the country's independent political development, and this gave it a different complexion.

The first armed collision of the backward feudal Qing Empire and advanced capitalist Britain led to the former's abject defeat. It was forcibly enslaved by foreign colonialists.

The technical and economic backwardness of China had an especially deleterious effect on the armaments of the Qing army. When the hostilities began it was at the level of the mid-17th century or, more precisely, the time when the country was conquered by the Manchus. The navy consisted of obsolete wooden junks and boats, whereas the British squadron had steamships never seen in China until that time. The Qing army had clumsy old cannon cast of iron or bronze in the 17th or 18th century. They were stationary, and had a fixed target. The British warships, on the other hand, had the latest large-calibre guns—12-pound howitzers, 9-pound field pieces, and guns mounted on revolving bases. And to counter the British mortars, muskets and carbines, the Chinese soldiers had flintlocks, bows and arrows, spears, sabres, cutlasses, and the like.

The outcome of the war with Britain came as a surprise to the Qing government and the emperor, who had had blind faith in the might of the Celestial Empire and the invincibility of its armies. At the outset of the war, the Qing had no accurate information about the adversary. Throughout the hostilities, the initiative was almost entirely in the hands of the British. Shifting all responsibilities in the war to provincial officials and commanders, it never occurred to the Qing government to see to dependable defence arrangements on a countrywide scale. It had neither a strategic plan nor any operational plans. With very few exceptions, the government afforded no funds to pay for the costs of the war, leaving it to the provincial authorities to raise the requisite monies locally.

The government confined itself to moving troops from inland provinces to what it thought would be the likely theatres of warfare, to appointing and dismissing commanders and dignitaries, with appointments and dismissals resembling a game of leapfrog rather than considered moves. On 24 March 1842, for example, the emperor sent Qi Ying to Guangzhou to take command of the troops there. On 28 March, an edict cancelled the previous appointment and made Qi Ying commander of the garrison in Hangzhou (Zhejiang province). Later, on the same day, the emperor ordered Qi Ying and Yilibu to Zhejiang to conduct peace negotiations with the British. On 7 April, Qi Ying was promoted to the station of imperial commissioner. And on 25 May, the emperor reaffirmed the initial order and appointed him commander of troops in Guangzhou. On 4 June, after the fall of Zhapu, Qi Ying was again placed in command of the Hangzhou garrison. This edict reached him on 14 June when he was on his way to Guangdong. On learning that the British were imperilling Zhenjiang, the court ordered Qi Ying

and Yilibu to go to that city without delay. In August 1842, Qi Ying conducted the peace talks in Nanjing, and in October was appointed viceroy of Jiangxi, Jiangsu, and Anhui. This succession of edicts, often conflicting ones, were evidence of the emperor's confusion, of the disarray reigning at the court, and of the court's inability to direct military operations. The ill-considered changes of dignitaries and commanders only added to the turmoil in the government and military apparatus.

Lacking reliable information about the hostilities, the emperor frequently issued preposterous orders. When Yi Shan sent him a memorial reporting what was thought to have been a victory at Guangzhou in May 1841, he decided, for example, that the war was happily over, and ordered troops that had been sent earlier in the year to Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Fujian to be withdrawn from these three provinces. The edict was issued at the very moment when the British were about to renew military action, this time in Zhejiang.

Throughout the war, supporters of surrender held the upper hand in the Qing government and army. Advocates of resistance, like Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen, had been removed from office at the outset of the war and were, in effect, denied any opportunity of influencing Qing policy or the course of the war. Commanders like Guan Tianpei and Chen Huacheng had fallen in battle, and other, like Hai Ling, had committed suicide. The troops were commanded by generals and officers of a defeatist mould, with an ill effect on the army's morale. Shanghai, Ningbo, Guazhou and other cities were abandoned by their garrisons long before the enemy's approach. Defeatism reigned in the army almost throughout the war, from the day the surrender party gained the upper hand at the court. The dedication, courage, and heroism of individual soldiers, officers, even garrisons (as in Zhenjiang, Zhapu, and Humen) could not alter the outcome. The state of the armed forces was affected above all by the corruption of the feudal bureaucratic system of China under the Manchus. The army's morale and combat readiness were of a low grade, most of the soldiers and officers were opium addicts and did not stick at banditry and plunder. There was ill-feeling between troops of different provinces, which at times led to open clashes. Officers had no scruples about appropriating army funds; even the meagre monies that the government allocated for defence fell into the hands of embezzlers.

One of the factors behind the defeatism of the Qing court, the Manchu officials and commanders, was fear of the people of China, fear of a popular armed uprising against the foreign Manchu regime. The court's refusal to support the patriotic movement that spread in regions affected by the hostilities was largely due to fear of arming the populace.

The China Policy of Other Capitalist Countries

Britain was not the only country seeking colonial gains in the Far East in the 1830s and 1840s. The United States and France, too, though less active and of more modest appetite, were highly interested in markets and territories. And their interest was greatest in the China market, to which British traders had something next to a monopoly in those days. In the 1840s, indeed, neither country was yet able to compete with Britain, much less fight a war of subjugation. But American merchants, like the British, were already amassing great fortunes in the opium trade. U.S. smugglers of opium, which they obtained chiefly in Turkey, were also leasing their ships to opium traders of other countries. The fast American clippers were usually armed, and frequently regular sea battles broke out between them and Chinese patrol ships. During the First Opium War, the United States sent a naval squadron to the China coast on the pretext of protecting Americans in that country. The true aim, however, was to wrest from the Qing the same rights and privileges that the British would win by force of arms.

The French bourgeoisie, keenly interested in the China market, hoped that Britain's thrust into China would open it up for France as well. The government of Louis Philippe sent a naval squadron there at the end of 1841. It brought spokesmen who, disembarking in Guangzhou in December, were authorised to offer the Qing authorities their good services in mediating and settling the Anglo-Chinese conflict. Following the signing by the British of the Nanjing Treaty, France fitted out a special diplomatic mission with instructions to conclude a favourable treaty with the Qing Empire.

Though the Russian tsar's foreign policy was reactionary through and through, the Russian government censured the opium trade in China and the Anglo-Chinese war of 1840-1842. This stand was largely due to the specific quality of Russo-Chinese relations and the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the East. Unlike the other European powers, Russia already had a few official treaties with China by that time. For more than a hundred years there had been a Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing which, in effect, served as a diplomatic agency, while no other power had any permanent representative in the imperial capital. Though Russia was also interested in maritime trade with China, it lacked the resources of Britain, France, and the United States, and still devoted most of its attention to expanding the traditional overland caravan trade through Kiachta. The growing British influence in the Far East, especially in China, perturbed St Petersburg. This was why, chiefly, the Russian government took a negative stance on the opium trade forcibly cultivated by British and American traders in China.

During the First Opium War, the tsar's government publicly demonstrated its good-neighbour attitude to China: on 12 April 1841 Tsar Nikolai I issued an *ukase* prohibiting the shipment of opium to China,⁴⁹ whereupon all requisite steps were taken forthwith for the document to become known in Beijing.

While the tsar's posture in relation to China during the war was determined chiefly by diplomatic considerations, the progressive Russian public was violently opposed to Britain's colonialist policy. A popular Russian journal of the time, *Biblioteka dlia chtenia* (Library for Reading) stigmatised Britain's conduct of its China affairs as follows: 'Without a doubt, the Chinese government has the indisputable right to issue any laws it may deem fit: British subjects conducting commerce on its soil are obliged to obey them by virtue of the rules of international law and of the particular agreements concluded between Great Britain and China.... On the moral and political plane, a war to avenge an offence done to a handful of smugglers and to the chief of the merchants who had taken the law into his own hands is by European standards distinctly unjust.'⁵⁰

In 1841 *Otechestvenniye zapiski* (Fatherland Notes) published an article by the distinguished Russian Sinologist, I. Bichurin, deeply sympathetic with patriotic China, entitled 'Survey of the Maritime Points in China Now Serving as the Theatre of British Military Actions'.⁵¹

The Anglo-Chinese war of 1840-1842 and the Treaty of Nanjing only whetted the appetite of the British bourgeoisie. Its ambition to subjugate China economically and politically in the interests of British capitalism grew more intense. Fourteen years after signing the Nanjing Treaty, the British government in league with the French started one more war against China, known as the Second Opium War.

Chapter 4

THE PEASANT WAR OF THE TAIPINGS (First Stage of 1850-1856)

The 1842 Treaty of Nanjing started the process of China's decline to the state of a semi-colony. It had been the first of a series of unequal treaties. To begin with, the British colonialists saddled China with a new, still more onerous instrument: the supplementary treaty known as the Treaty of the Bogue signed on 8 October 1843 in Humen, which gave the British most-favoured-nation status, the right of establishing settlements in treaty ports, extraterritoriality, freedom for naval vessels to enter treaty ports, and limits on transit customs duties for British goods.

Similar treaties were imposed on China by the United States of America and by France. The American-Chinese treaty, signed at Wangxia, near Macao, on 3 July 1844, accorded Americans the same rights and privileges that were enjoyed by the British under the Nanjing Treaty and the Treaty of the Bogue, and a few additional benefits. One of its articles, exploited by Western powers to make new claims on China, provided for the possible revision of the treaty by mutual consent of the signatories 12 years after its conclusion. The Wangxia Treaty served as a model for the Franco-Chinese treaty concluded on 24 October 1844 in Huangpu, and the Swedish-Chinese treaty of March 1847.

Expansionism of the Capitalist Powers After the First Opium War

Consolidating their positions in China, the Western capitalist powers, notably Britain, the most aggressive of the predators thrusting into China, encountered resistance from the Chinese in and around the treaty ports and especially in Guangdong province, where armed patriotic detachments had operated already at the time of the First Opium War. In October 1842, local self-defence units were

formed under the leadership of local educational societies, their strength running to nearly 100,000 men.

The basic goal of the patriots was to limit foreign settlement in the outskirts of Guangzhou to the grounds of the former foreign factories, and not to allow foreigners into the main city. In November 1843 they covered the walls of houses in Guangzhou with an appeal for the populace to resist the British. And on 7 December 1843, when drunken British seamen attacked and injured several Chinese street peddlers, the irate populace led by followers of the patriotic societies set fire to the foreign factories. The disturbances were suppressed by the local authorities, who executed ten 'ring-leaders' and paid the British 267,000 *liang* in damages. At the same time, using the unrest among the populace as a pretext, they delayed admission of the British to Guangzhou. In April 1848, the British took possession of the forts on the Zhujiang and made the viceroy, Qi Ying, give them written assurances that he would open the city within two years. In reply a new wave of anti-British actions broke out in Guangdong province. The Qing government took advantage of it. When the two years were over, it informed the British superintendent that it could not go against the will of the people of Guangzhou and allow foreigners into the city.

Responding to the call of the patriotic societies, some 100,000 of their armed followers gathered at the approaches to Guangzhou. To avoid more trouble, the British were forced to back down.

There were anti-British manifestations in Amoy in 1844 and in Fuzhou in 1845. And in Shanghai the populace held a mass anti-British procession in 1848. In 1849, the Portuguese governor of Macao, who had secured the cession of Macao from China with British, American, and French help, was assassinated.

With industrial growth impelling Britain, the United States and France to look for new markets, the potentially vast China market beckoned with uncommon force. Capitalists were not content with the unilateral rights and privileges obtained from the Qing government in the First Opium War. Their hopes of a steep increase of exports to China had not come true. As before, the China market accounted for only an insignificant portion of the manufactured goods exported by the capitalist states. Besides, despite the general growth of the China trade (particularly, the greater importation of Chinese silk and tea to Europe and the U.S.A.), the shipments of factory-made goods to China grew very slowly and sporadically, and often tended to decline.

This was due chiefly to the specific quality of the Chinese economy then, in which subsistence farming predominated. Furthermore, a large and continuously growing share of the shipments to China by the above powers consisted of contraband opium for which the

Chinese paid in silver, silk, and tea, thus reducing their already limited capacity for purchasing foreign made goods. Marx noted this in one of his articles. 'With the present economical framework of Chinese society,' he wrote, 'which turns upon diminutive agriculture and domestic manufactures as its pivots, any large import of foreign produce is out of the question. Still ... it might gradually absorb a surplus quantity of English and American goods if the opium trade were suppressed.'¹ He also wrote: 'The Chinese cannot take both goods and drug; under actual circumstances, extension of the Chinese trade resolves into extension of the opium trade; the growth of the latter is incompatible with the development of legitimate commerce.'²

This was also admitted by some spokesmen of the British bourgeoisie. A parliamentary committee appointed in 1847 to look into the state of Anglo-Chinese trade reached the conclusion that 'the difficulties of the trade do not arise from any want of demand in China for articles of British manufactures, or from the increasing competition of other nations; the payment for opium absorbs the silver to the great inconvenience of the general traffic of the Chinese, and tea and silk must in fact pay the rest.'³ But the more aggressive element in Britain, especially the opium, silk and tea merchants, did not want to give up the lucrative opium trade in favour of increasing exports of manufactured goods. They counted on expanding the China market by securing unobstructed access to new ports and to inland regions, thus increasing shipments both of industrial goods and opium. Their ambition was to make all China a vast 'open port'.

Some influential members of the cabinet, notably Palmerston, who represented the interests of the most aggressive section of the British capitalist class, were in sympathy with these ambitions, but knew that they could not be imposed on China without one more war. In September 1850, Palmerston wrote to the British superintendent for Chinese affairs, George Bonham:

'I clearly see that the Time is fast coming when we shall be obliged to strike another Blow in China, and that blow must be the occupation of a Position on the Yangtse Kiang to cut off communication by the Great Canal. But it would not be advisable to give the Chinese any intimation that such would be our measure...

'They must not only see the Stick but actually feel it on their Shoulders before they yield to that only argument which to them brings conviction, the *argumentum Baculinum*.'⁴

In the early 1850s, the British ruling class, disturbed by the stout resistance to their designs of the people of Guangzhou, feared that in the event of a war the Chinese would render determined resistance. So, until a more propitious time, they chose to deal with the Qing authorities by negotiation.

The Social and Economic Consequences to China of the Incursion of Foreign Capital

The forcible opening of the China market to foreign capitalists as a result of the First Opium War had a strong bearing on China's subsequent political, social, and economic development. It started the country's decline to a semi-colony and the conversion of the Chinese feudal society into semi-feudal and semi-bourgeois, which it remained until the victory of the people's democratic revolution in 1949.

The forcible inclusion of China in the capitalist world economy following the First Opium War led, in the final analysis, to the development of capitalist relations in the Chinese feudal society. But the Qing Empire experienced no few major upheavals before capitalist relations began, spontaneously and irrepressibly, to hew their way forward in the thick of the feudal system. As an immediate result of the war there was a visible expansion of commodity and money relations. The continuously growing export of tea and raw silk stimulated production in some of the tea-growing and silk-cultivating regions, which were now working exclusively for abroad. But the relations of production there remained feudalistic.

Another important consequence of the Opium War was the emergence in China of a comprador bourgeoisie. Unlike later times, when the compradores, especially the leading ones, began combining their function of middlemen in commerce with independent enterprise, the early ones confined themselves to mediation between foreign entrepreneurs and the Chinese market. Therefore, the emergence of a comprador bourgeoisie and the growth of commodity and money relations did not stand for any far-reaching change in the economic basis of Chinese society. In the first few decades after the First Opium War, until approximately the 1870s and 1880s, feudalism continued to rule undivided. True, in some areas there were private manufactories, but they were no more than negligible in the general system of social production and played no role of any substance in the country's economic life.

At the same time, the First Opium War generated certain destructive factors in Chinese feudal society, with a marked effect on the condition of the working masses. This led to a sharpening of class and national contradictions, and ultimately to the eruption of a peasant war known as the Taiping Rebellion. 'The occasion of this outbreak,' Marx wrote, 'has unquestionably been afforded by the English cannon forcing upon China that soporific drug called opium.'⁵

The First Opium War had emptied the imperial treasury. Its cost fell as a heavy burden onto the working people. Defeated China had to pay Britain a war indemnity that approximately equalled the

country's annual budget, and this in a matter of four years. A chronic deficit developed. In 1842-1845 Emperor Daoguang repeatedly ordered the provincial authorities to raise additional funds to mend the budget. In effect, this was an order to increase taxes and levies. That, in any case, was how the orders were understood by the local authorities, who lost no time to obey. In some provinces, notably Hunan and Hubei, the various levies ran into dozens. The sums extorted from the population were many times larger than needed to repair the state budget. A considerable portion settled in the coffers of corrupt officials.

The pressure of the supplementary levies was borne almost exclusively by the peasants, because the *shenshi* gentry, the big landowners, the village rich, who were closely associated with the local bureaucracy, used all manner of ruses to evade the impositions or to shift them onto the plain people.

A still more destructive impact on the condition of the people and on Chinese society as a whole was exercised by the in effect legalised sale of opium (as a result of the war) by British and American drug traffickers. According to anything but complete data, it had gone up from 20,600 chests in 1840 to 59,600 chests in 1852. Apart from ruining the health of hundreds of thousands of people, and apart from demoralising Chinese society, the opium imports on so large a scale created an unfavourable trade balance, causing a tremendous flow of silver abroad. Silver reserves dwindled, and the price of silver went up. China's position became practically untenable with the basic silver unit—the *liang* (used in the payment of taxes and in large commercial and financial transactions)—going up in price. The purchasing power of silver increased, while the relative value of copper money, the *wen*, used in smaller transactions and as change, dropped accordingly. The exchange value of the *liang* rose from 1,656 *wen* in 1843 to 2,355 *wen* in 1849.

This substantial change in the traditional relation of silver and copper specie was disrupting the country's economic life and struck hardest of all at the interests of the peasantry, the small traders, and other labourers who, with their miserly incomes, dealt in copper money only.

The peasants' payments of basic taxes increased visibly, because the tariffs, the same in terms of *liang*, were much higher than before in terms of copper coin. In short, the rising rate of the *liang* stood for what was in effect a rising tax burden. From 1843 to 1850 taxes had gone up by 33 to 64 per cent, and in some provinces, such as Guanxi, Hunan, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, they rose even higher still.

With the reserves of silver dwindling, its inflow into the treasury declined, this being largely due to chronic arrears.

Marx described the situation in the following words: 'The tribute

to be paid to England after the unfortunate war of 1840, the great unproductive consumption of opium, the drain of the precious metals by this trade, the destructive influence of foreign competition on native manufactures, the demoralized condition of the public administration, produced two things: the old taxation became more burdensome and harassing, and new taxation was added to the old.¹⁶

The rising rate of the *liang* caused by the shipment of silver out of China by foreign opium traders was damaging not only for the bulk of taxpayers (peasants owning land and the many small landowners), but also for the tenants who owned no land and therefore paid no land tax. Landowners went to all lengths to raise the rent and the cash security paid when concluding land contracts in order to shift the tax pressure onto tenants.

The deterioration of the condition of the labouring classes in towns and villages due to the disruption of the monetary system, coupled with the mounting pressure of taxes and the greater plunder of landless and land-hungry peasants by landowners, created fertile soil for the growth of usury, which also contributed greatly to the ruin of the mass of the people.

The period following the First Opium War witnessed the ruin of more and more peasants and the aggregation of more and more land in the hands of the propertied classes. According to some sources, in Guangxi province this concentration of land in the hands of landowners, usurers, and big merchants (often all three in one person) was especially intensive along the Xijiang, where tens of thousands of peasant families were reduced to utter poverty. But the same was true of many counties of Hunan, Jiangsu, Shandong, Sichuan, and other provinces. In Guangxi, some 90 per cent of the peasants lost title to their land, which was appropriated by a relatively small group of landed proprietors and money-lenders. Much the same occurred in Guangdong, Hunan, Henan, and other provinces of South and Central China.¹⁷

The impoverishment of peasant farmers and tenants was frequently aggravated by natural calamities. From 1846 to 1850 floods, droughts, locusts, and the like, wreaked havoc in more than 500 counties of Zhili, Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, Shenxi, and Gansu, and in 1847-1850 hunger and epidemics afflicted many counties in Guangxi, Jiangxi, Hunan, and other provinces in South China. Hundreds of thousands of peasants suffering these blows of fate abandoned their hovels and turned into homeless vagabonds and robbers.

In the wake of China's defeat in the First Opium War, foreign competition exercised a more than ever destructive effect on local handicraft industries. The forcible opening of the China market to

the capitalist powers saw a steep increase in the importation of foreign goods, especially textiles. This abundant influx of factory-made commodities that were cheaper than the domestic product gradually undermined urban and rural handicrafts and stimulated the spread of commodity and money relations. True, foreign competition was still unable to completely destroy handicrafts in China. But in the maritime provinces, in the vicinity of the open ports, where imports also benefited from better transport, local handicrafts were badly impaired.

There were also painful repercussions for some areas in South and Central China from the shifting of important supply routes owing to the opening of the five treaty ports. Guangzhou, no longer the only outlet for China's trade with the West European countries and the United States, was rapidly losing its importance. By the early 1850s, Shanghai eclipsed it visibly, attracting most of the goods that had earlier gone through Guangzhou. The old, once lively trade routes connecting Guangzhou with Central China through Guangxi and Hunan quickly fell into disuse, and hundreds of thousands of people employed in transporting and guarding the merchandise in transit found themselves out of work.

The opening of the five ports to foreign trade also made redundant many of the coastal shipping lines to and from Guangzhou. The large Chinese fleet of junks was rapidly superseded by the more efficient British and American steamers, costing tens of thousands of Chinese seamen their jobs.

The mass ruin of peasants and craftsmen, and the loss of their earnings by hundreds of thousands of people, pushed up the number of destitutes more than tenfold against the prewar time. Hungry people wandered about the country in search of casual earnings, a bowl of rice, and shelter. Resort to robbery and banditry spelled deliverance from death by starvation for many of the ruined and impoverished.

In sum, the First Opium War had only widened the abyss between the propertied and unpropertied classes, and upset the precarious balance that had obtained in the Chinese feudal society. The social crisis, whose initial symptoms had surfaced at the end of the 18th century, led to an acute sharpening of contradictions between peasant and landowner, between plain people and officials, between the bulk of the Chinese people and the Manchu-Chinese feudal elite.

The Class Struggle of the Peasants in 1842-1850

As the internal contradictions grew more acute, the class struggle of the oppressed peasantry against landowners and the Qing authori-

ties began to mount in intensity, and finally developed into a powerful anti-feudal, anti-Manchu war, the war of the Taipings, which engulfed a considerable part of the country.

Owing to the low level of political consciousness and organisation among the peasantry, the struggle took the shape chiefly of dispersed and spontaneous anti-landlord actions by tenant farmers and of anti-tax riots which often grew into armed risings against the Qing authorities. There were similar risings of oppressed national minorities, and lastly, semi-bandit actions of the many robber bands consisting chiefly of ruined peasants, artisans, and *declassé* elements.

From 1814 to 1849 the unofficial historical chronicle, *Donghua-lu*, registered 110 spontaneous mutinies and armed risings in the country's various provinces. In Guangxi alone, in 1848-1850, there were several dozen armed risings of the masses.

In many of the anti-tax riots following the First Opium War, small landowners and *shenshi*, discomfited by the mounting tax burden, took an active part alongside the peasants. They were, indeed, the instigators and leaders of many such mutinies.

By the time of the Taiping Rebellion many secret societies, the traditional type of political organisation of the downtrodden populace, had come into existence. The societies were especially widespread in 1847-1850. A score of secret societies sprang up in 1850 alone in various counties of Guangxi. In Guangdong, Hunan, Jiangxi, Henan, Anhui, Shandong, and Jiangsu, too, there were dozens of different secret societies. In Anhui, Henan, and Shandong they were known as *niandang*, the torch-bearers, and in Jiangsu, in the vicinity of the Grand Canal, people called them *fudang* (consisting mainly of sailors, boatmen, and others employed on the canal). South of the Yangzi the secret societies were better known as *tiandihui* (societies of heaven and earth), *sandianhui* (the three dots societies), or *sanhui* (the triad societies).

In those days, secret societies were well camouflaged organisations of several thousand members each. They were local in nature and, as a rule, had no ties with one another. Their activities were fragmented by reason of the deep-rooted localistic clan sentiment, which doubtless weakened the struggle of the masses.

The bulk of the membership in rural areas consisted of village poor, and in towns of artisans, wage labourers, and petty traders. There were also *declassé* elements in them, including vagrants, beggars, and former soldiers, small landlords opposed to the Qing, and members of the scholar gentry, the *shenshi*, who had either failed the civil service examinations or were denied official posts. This diversity often made the class essence of the societies indefinite.

Still, they imparted some degree of organisation to the class and political struggle of the people. But their demands were modest to

the extreme, reflecting the low level of class and political consciousness among the oppressed strata. The chief demand that these organisations had in common was, 'overthrow the Qing, reinstate the Ming'. Most of the secret societies also popularised the traditional anti-feudal slogans of the people's movements of medieval times: 'In the name of Heaven restore Justice' and 'Officials oppress, the people revolt'. Besides, some of the societies had slogans reflecting the egalitarian sentiments of the poor: 'Strip the rich to help the poor', but some advocated principles favouring the rich, 'For the *Zhongyitang* (Society of Loyalty and Justice) there are no big and no small, it does not harm either rich or poor'. Others came out with vague ideas about common property and with the utopian notions of the Chinese peasantry dating to the era of the disintegration of the clan community: 'Destroy boundaries between fields and let all live as one family' and, 'The eight winds make up the world, all families make one clan'. Indeed, the nature of the slogans depended in many ways on the personality of the leader and his class background.

Secret societies played a prominent part in giving momentum to the class struggle of peasants and other oppressed people in the period that preceded the Taiping Rebellion. They laid the ground for, and led, many a popular uprising.

In 1847-1850, the province of Guangxi, one of the most distant from Beijing, was the scene of violent peasant struggles. The class antagonisms there had sharpened owing to hunger and the incredible brutality of the landed gentry and officials. The anger against the landlords had been mounting there since 1844, especially in Guiping county, which eventually became the cradle of the Taiping Rebellion. Armed peasant detachments numbering several hundred men were active in the county throughout that period.

In the years that followed, the secret anti-Manchu societies in Guangxi province became highly active, rallying commoners for armed actions. The first such action was a peasant rising in the neighbouring Xinning (Hunan) and Pingleh (Guangxi) counties, where a crop failure in 1847 resulted in frightful famine. The instigators of the revolt were leaders of the Fengfenghui secret society—Lei Zaihao, a Yao and Li Shide and Chen Mingji, who were Chinese. On 18 October 1847, in Huangbeigang village of Xinning county Lei Zaihao gathered a troop of several hundred men, fortified his native village, and raided the homes of members of the Qing administration in near-by areas. Two detachments of regulars and mercenary landlord units of the rural militia were instantly sent out against him. On 3 November, the rebels engaged the enemy at Xiaochi, turned him to flight, and marched to Pingleh county, where they occupied Meixikou district. Here they were joined by numerous local peasants, both Yao and Chinese. Almost overnight, Lei Zaihao's force grew to

several thousand men. The populace, which was also suffering from the famine, assisted the rebels willingly. All the more, because they brought to book the hated officials, and also because they captured food stores and distributed provisions among the famine-stricken. Soon, Hunan and Guangxi troops, along with the landlord militia, arrived in Pingleh, and encircled the rebels. A battle ensued. On 18 November, Lei's detachment broke out of the enemy ring and marched back to Xinning. But here, towards the end of November, it was blocked by numerically superior government troops and mercenaries, and on 3 December, during one of his raids, Lei was captured, and executed. Having lost its leader, the rebel force was wiped out.

Lei Zaihao's action was the first of a series of relatively serious popular risings in Guangxi, culminating in due course in the peasant war of the Taipings. The risings were precipitated by the sharp decline in the level of life of the mass of the people owing to the famine, whose root causes, apart from natural calamities, lay in the greed of the landlords, money-lenders, and officials.

A large-scale peasant revolt erupted in Hengzhou in the spring of 1848. Its leader, a member of the Triad secret society, Zhang Jiaxiang, reached an understanding with other Triad fraternities, and started the rising with their assistance, issuing the call, 'Strip the rich to help the poor'. Thousands of famine-stricken peasants responded. Zhang's detachments mounted operations in the Guangdong counties of Qinzhou and Lingshan, and the counties of Guixian and Hengzhou in Guangxi province. They captured pawnbrokers' storehouses and rice stores, raided landlords' mansions, imposed indemnities on rich houses, and compelled them to give food to peasants. According to contemporary accounts, they 'plundered modestly'. Their fighters wore red headbands, and on their banners they carried the following inscriptions: 'In the name of Heaven restore Justice', 'We will take from the rich to help the poor', and 'Hit the officials but spare the people'. Zhang addressed the populace with the following appeals: 'Rich men, give up your money! People of the middle classes, awaken! Commoners, follow me! Let's plough up the impoverished fields!' The slogans were highly popular among the peasant poor.

In December 1848, Zhang's force attacked and defeated government troops at Binzhou, whose population was in the throes of hunger. Thereupon, the peasant rising spread throughout the region. Having failed to suppress it by armed force, the terrified Guangxi authorities tried to win Zhang over by bribery. And they succeeded. In December 1849, he went into the service of the Qing, and changed his name to Guo-liang (Buttress of the State). Later, he participated in military operations against the Taipings, and was killed.

In April 1848, a member of a secret society, the brigand chief Chen Yagui, gathered a few thousand peasants in Qinzhou and Bin-

zhou, and started an insurrection in Wuxuan county. Like Zhang Jiaxiang's forces, his detachment attacked landlords, money-lenders, and officials but, as even official sources attest, 'did not harm the population'. Chen operated in a large area in central Guangxi, including the counties and prefectures of Xiangzhou, Wuxuan, Guixian, Guiping, Binzhou, Qianjiang, and Laibin.

Unlike his predecessor Zhang, Chen Yagui had no programme for the poor, and did not seek their allegiance. He gravitated more to the ways of a free-and-easy robber band. The swift and audacious raids of his relatively small force (of a few thousand men) terrorised the authorities and the government troops, who hastily withdrew behind city walls at its approach and only rarely ventured to engage it in the field. In the autumn of 1849, Chen's rebels captured the county towns of Xuren and Lipu, and turned them into their base. But in the summer of 1850 Chen was defeated by government troops and tried to escape to the hills of Luolushan. In October, however, he was betrayed by the local people led into temptation by the promise of a large reward.

Still more typical representatives of the freebooting fraternity were Triad members Zhang Zhao, known as Big-headed Ram, and Tian Fang, nicknamed Big Carp, both of whom were former river boatmen. The small robber band they had formed in 1845 of former Guangdong volunteers disbanded by the authorities after the end of the First Opium War, attacked government and merchant vessels navigating the rivers of Guangdong province. In 1848, in league with Ren Wenbing, also a pirate, they gathered a large detachment which operated along the waterways from Wuzhou to Guixian and from Xunzhou to Liuzhou.

The biggest of the peasant actions of that period is linked with the name of Li Yuanfa, who had formed a secret society in Xinning county in September 1849 with the object of 'hitting the rich, and helping the poor'. In November, the members of his society captured the town of Xinning, and killed the local magistrate. They were joined by the poor of the town, captured food stores, and freed inmates of the local prison. Government troops reinforced by the rural landlord militia besieged the town. For six weeks the rebels flung back all attacks. When their food stores ran out they broke through the enemy lines under cover of darkness on 11 January 1850. The Qing troops lost no time to enter the town. They killed several hundred peaceful townsmen, and hastened to report to the provincial viceroy that the uprising was squashed and Li Yuanfa was dead.

In the meantime, the rebels and their leader Li Yuanfa headed for the northern part of Guangxi, recruiting peasants on the way, and attacking officials and rich houses. The poor from the neighbouring

villages rushed to join Li's detachment. Peasant risings spread like wildfire in more than ten counties of northern Guangxi and the neighbouring counties of Hunan and Guizhou provinces. Terrified by the scale of the peasant movement, the provincial authorities summoned troops posthaste to the rebel area, and quickly formed a landlord militia. In May 1850, provincial troops inflicted a series of defeats on the rebel peasants and drove them into the mountainous regions of Jinzifeng (in Xinning county). Here, Li Yuanfa's force was trapped, surrounded, and wiped out.

These risings were not the only anti-feudal and anti-Manchu actions of the Guangxi and Hunan peasantry in the period immediately preceding the Taiping peasant war. There were some thirty relatively large rebel bands of peasants in Guangxi at that time.

Since the local authorities were unable to cope with them, the Guangxi gentry sent spokesmen to Beijing on their own account in the summer of 1850 to call the attention of the Qing government to the gravity of the situation in their province. Their memorial said that several hundred rebel detachments were 'running loose' in Guangxi, that the rebels wore red headbands and carried flags with the inscription, 'In the name of Heaven restore Justice', and that the rebel movement had already spread to seven commanderies and one prefecture.

The peasant movement in Guangxi, whose scale was indeed very great, paved the way for the anti-feudal and anti-Manchu war of the Taipings launched by the secret society founded by Hong Xiuquan.

Preparations for a Peasant War by the Baishangdihui Society

The Taiping movement was initiated by a village teacher, Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864), a peasant by birth who had endured all the hardships of peasant life. Eager to gain a higher, more secure place in society, to become a *shenshi*, he had thrice tried to pass civil service examinations and win the degree of *xiucai*, which would have given him title to an official post. But he failed all the three times. During one of his journeys to Guangzhou to sit for the examinations he met foreign missionaries and became acquainted in general outline with the Christian religion. Its idea that all men were equal made a deep impression on him. Hong ruminated about the injustices of the prevailing order, and finally decided to dedicate himself to fighting the Manchus for a more just social system.

To prepare the ground for a general uprising, Hong set out to establish a legal religious society of a Christian type, the Society of God-Worshippers (Baishangdihui), imposing tight discipline. In June

and July 1843 he succeeded in persuading some of his relatives and close friends to adopt Christianity, thus launching the Baishangdihui. Among his earliest followers were his cousin Hong Rengan and his close friend Feng Yunshan, also a village teacher and a man of keen intelligence and irrepressible energy. Hong initiated Feng in his plans, and the latter became his faithful and dependable associate, a splendid agitator, and organiser of the Taiping movement. The three began to spread their cause first in their native Huaxian county and the surrounding areas of Guangdong, and then also in Guangxi. In September 1844, Feng Yunshan set out for Guiping county in Guangxi.

Meanwhile, in November, Hong Xiuquan returned to his native county, where in the following two years he went back to teaching, while constructing the ideological groundwork for his organisation. In 1845 and the following year he wrote a number of treatises setting forth his doctrine. In somewhat veiled form, he expounded the idea of removing the rule of Manchu feudal lords, which in the eyes of the people epitomised the injustices of the prevailing order, and installing a new society of justice based on the ancient Chinese utopian notions of *Datong* (Great Unity) and *Taiping* (Great Prosperity or Great Peace).

Hong set forth a religious and moral code. It envisaged worship of the Christian God, suppression of 'heresy', that is, of the widespread Buddhist and Taoist religions, destruction of Buddhist and Taoist divinities, condemnation of debauch, filial impiety, murder, thievery, plunder, gambling, drunkenness, opium smoking, fortune-telling, and the like. Though rebelling against the deification of Confucius and calling for the destruction of his portrayals, Hong referred to Confucius in his writings as to a paramount authority, used such Confucian notions as 'law of Heaven', and even worked into the dogma of his religious system so purely Confucian an idea as filial piety.

In the meantime, Feng Yunshan engaged in vigorous propaganda in Guangxi, organising branches of Hong's society. He entrenched himself in the Zixingshan area of Guiping county, where he was charcoal burner, digger of ore, and teacher, and where he got to know many local people. By August 1847, he had formed branches of the Baishangdihui in the adjoining districts, with more than 2,000 members. At first, chiefly unfortunate people joined the society, attracted by its ideas of equality and social justice—the village poor, miners, charcoal burners. Then, moved by anti-Manchu sentiment, came some richer peasants, even a few minor landlords.

In August 1847, Hong Xiuquan joined Feng in Zixingshan. Together, they worked assiduously to strengthen the Baishangdihui, and to build its membership. By the end of the year branches of the society were active not only in Guiping, but also in a few other Guangxi counties.

The leadership of the Baishangdihui took shape by the end of 1847. In addition to Hong Xiuquan, ideological leader and mentor, and to Feng Yunshan, in charge of all practical affairs, it included people who later played a prominent part in the Taiping Rebellion: the ruined peasants Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui, ore digger Qin Rigang, petty landowner Wei Changhui, and Shi Dakai, scion of a prosperous peasant family. The minor landlords who had joined the society for various reasons of their own, did not affect the nature of the organisation. It was peasant in character from start to finish.

The opposition of the leaders of the Baishangdihui to the traditional religions, which were a crucial ideological buttress of the prevailing order, alarmed the local landlords. On their insistence, Feng Yunshan was thrown into the local gaol in January 1848. The arrest of Feng, who had in fact handled all affairs and, besides, was well acquainted with local conditions, was a heavy loss. Hong set out for Guangzhou to plead for Feng's release before the viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi. Matters went from bad to worse after his departure. Doubts, second thoughts, and strife, encouraged by local landlords and officials, assailed part of his followers. But the crisis was overcome by the enterprise of the energetic and cunning Yang Xiuqing. Taking advantage of the widespread old belief about good and evil spirits entering people, he simulated deafness and made it known that he had been struck dumb, and thereupon announced that he had been entered by the spirit of the Christian God, who used him to proclaim his will. A little later his example was followed by one more leader of the society, Xiao Chaogui, who declared himself the incarnation of the spirit of Jesus Christ and herald of Christ's will. These artless 'miracles' made a deep impression on the local followers of Hong Xiuquan, solidified unity and spurred a new massive influx of people to the Baishangdihui. Likewise, they added to the prestige and influence of Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui.

In October 1848, Yang and Xiao won the release of Feng Yunshan by bribing the Guiping county magistrate with money contributed by local charcoal burners. Transported to his native village as a person without a definite occupation, Feng was reunited with Hong Xiuquan, who had returned there from Guangzhou. The two discussed the situation in great detail, and in July 1849 returned to Zixingshan, the chief base of their society. To avoid strife, they were compelled to recognise the 'miracles' that were visited on Yang and his friend Xiao in their absence.

By the time Hong and Feng returned to Zixingshan, the situation in Guangxi had become highly strained. With famine ravaging many parts of the province, reducing the peasant masses to unbearable straits, rebel sentiments were maturing quickly. Baishangdihui activity, especially in and around Zixingshan, was becoming increasingly

radical. Protecting the interests of its members, chiefly the village poor, members of the society clashed with the landlords' rural militia, armed supporters of the Qing.

Knowing this, and knowing too that the Baishangdihui had become a mass organisation with deep roots in many Guangxi and Guangdong counties, Hong and other leaders of the society began priming for an armed uprising. Agitation began on a wide scale among the rank and file, units were formed and taught the craft of war in joss houses and temples. On his estate in Jintian, Wei Changhui set up a smithy where swords and spears were manufactured at night, while in the daytime, to deceive the authorities, ironsmiths produced farm implements. Similar smithies and workshops were installed in a number of other locations. The arms they made were secretly transported to the hills.

The Jintian Uprising—Start of the Taiping Peasant War

In June 1850, with peasant riots rocking many of the counties in Guangxi province and armed clashes erupting between the local Chinese populace and the *hakkas*, who were later Chinese settlers in the area, Hong decided that the situation was ripe and sent all Baishangdihui chapters orders to mobilise. Devotees of the 'true God' in Guangxi and Guangdong, these said, were obliged to take up arms, join in detachments, and concentrate with their families south of the Zixingshan hills, near the village of Jintian, where the terrain was convenient for defence and the gathering of armed forces. Some 20,000 men and women responded, armed with anything they could lay their hands on. The bulk were village poor, and there were nearly 3,000 miners.

A military camp sprang up at Jintian in early November 1850. The leaders, headed by Yang Xiuqing, followed a preconceived plan, seeking to form a close-knit military force. Separate units were formed of women, who were prohibited to communicate with the men, the latter likewise being forbidden to have anything to do with the womenfolk. This was to benefit tight discipline and strengthen morale and the fighting spirit. All men and commanders were dressed in ordinary peasant clothes and were distinguishable from the rest of the population by their red headbands. They rejected the Manchu custom of shaving their heads and leaving a pigtail, and wore their hair long. For this their enemies called them 'longhairs' (*changmao*).

What were called 'sacred stores' were set up in the vicinity of Jintian, from which rebels and their families received egalitarian quotas of food and clothing, and to which they were obliged to turn in all

valuables and the money they had obtained from the sale of their houses and properties after Hong's mobilisation order. The stores were also filled with food from captured government warehouses, and with food, clothing, money, and valuables taken from officials and landlords who actively supported the Manchu regime. The 'sacred stores' were needed to supply the rebel army, on the one hand, and on the other to secure the egalitarian principles of 'peasant socialism' which, as the leaders of the Baishangdihui conceived them, were the foundation of justice.

Soon after Hong had issued his mobilisation order, hostilities broke out in the rebel region. At first, there were minor clashes between rebels and landlord militia. But the Qing government was disturbed by the obvious success of the rebels, and began bringing in troops from other provinces. By the beginning of 1851, the military forces massed in the rebel region included reinforcements from Guangdong, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan and Fujian—this in addition to local troops. At the close of December 1850 and in early January 1851, the Taipings won two large battles against the Qing army.

On 11 January 1851, at Jintian, the rebellion was officially declared, its aim being to overthrow the Qing dynasty and establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace (*Taiping tianguo*). That is why the rebellion has since been called the Taiping Rebellion, and the rebels the Taipings. On 23 March 1851, Hong Xiuquan, initiator and leader of the Taiping movement, declared himself *tianwang*, the heavenly prince, and was made head of state.

Brought together by the utopian idea of 'great prosperity' and consolidated by tight discipline, the Taipings were fearless in battle. From March to August 1851, they scored several major victories, and captured large amounts of arms and other booty. But in August and September the Qing troops received reinforcements, drew a tight ring round the Taiping base in the Zixingshan hills, and began stepping up pressure. Meeting the challenge, the Taipings breached the enemy blockade on 15-18 September, abandoned their base, and headed north-east.

On 25 September, their advance guard under Luo Dagang captured Yongan, a prefectural centre more than 100 km north-east of the Zixingshan range. This was the first relatively large town taken by the rebels. At the approaches to it, the Taipings built a system of fortifications, turned the area into a base, and installed themselves there until April 1852.

During the stay in Yongan, the rebel leaders busied themselves at establishing the pillars of a Taiping state and strengthening their army. In December 1851, the head of state, Heavenly Prince Hong Xiuquan, elevated his closest associates, Yang Xiuqing, Xiao Chao-gui, Feng Yunshan, Wei Changhui, and Shi Dakai to the rank of heredit-

itary princes (*wang*) of different grades, as was customary in ancient China, and granted their wives and children, and all his own relatives, various honorary titles that distinguished them from the other Taipings. The newly-appointed princes, the highest dignitaries in the rebel camp after Hong, formed something resembling a government headed by Yang Xiuqing and responsible solely to the absolute monarch, Heavenly Prince Hong. An elaborate set of rites was devised of various kinds of greetings and toasts in honour of the princes obligatory for the rank-and-file Taipings when meeting the titled personages. Also, a system of official and military ranks was introduced modelled on those that had existed in ancient China at the time of the Zhou dynasty, which the Taiping leaders revered as the golden age in the country's history.

The main feature of the Taipings' policy towards the various classes of the Chinese feudal society was that they avoided harming the plain people, killed the hated Qing officials, and took the food, clothing, and valuables of landlords and the wealthy. Their leaders cultivated rigid discipline, asceticism, fearlessness, contempt of hardships, and perseverance.

In February 1852, the Taiping army was again encircled, this time in Yongan, by a numerically superior and better armed host of Qing troops. It was running short of food, arms and ammunition. During the night of the 5th of April, the Taipings took advantage of a pouring rain to slip quietly along obscure footpaths past the enemy posts. The Qing troops followed in pursuit. On the 7th they caught up with the rebel rearguard and engaged it in a highly unfavourable situation for the latter. The battle cost the Taipings more than 2,000 men and women killed.

The Taipings wreaked fiery vengeance. On the following day, rebel ambushes along the mountain road fell on the punitive Qing force and annihilated some 5,000 soldiers and commanders, including a few generals. Having thus made their rear safe, they marched in haste north-westward to the town of Guilin, the administrative centre of Guangxi province.

The retreat from Yongan drew the curtain on the initial period of the Taiping Rebellion—a period when it was still of a local character, though more thoroughly prepared and better organised than other local risings. During this time, the Taipings became a redoubtable force surpassing their enemy in fighting spirit, unity, discipline, and warcraft, and motivated by the aim of extending the Taiping kingdom proclaimed in Jintian to the rest of the country. This provided the groundwork for the growth of the Taiping Rebellion into a powerful peasant war that spread to a considerable part of the country.

The Taiping March From Guangxi to the Central Provinces

On 18 April 1852, the Taiping army besieged Guilin. For a month the rebels bombarded the massive city gates with their few cannon, tried again and again to take the walls by assault, and even endeavoured to dig a tunnel under them and blow them up with mines. But in vain. The garrison resisted staunchly.

The Taipings learned that a large troop was on its way to relieve the besieged, struck camp on the night of 19 May, and headed north-west again with the intention of reaching the middle reaches of the Yangzi. On 3 June they stormed and captured the prefectural city of Quanzhou in northern Guangxi. During the battle, Feng Yunshan was mortally wounded by a shrapnel, and soon succumbed to his wounds.

By mid-June the rebels overran the easily defensible mountainous area round Daozhou in southern Hunan, where they were compelled to stay two months to reinforce their battle-weary and depleted army.

Priming for their march north to overthrow the Manchus and establish a Taiping state, the rebels made a point of informing the population of their intentions, and winning its support. Several appeals to the people of China were issued in the name of Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui in Daozhou, calling on all Chinese regardless of their station to rise against the Manchu 'barbarians' in order to revive China and re-establish the 'celestial principles of relations among people'.

The dispossession of landlords, rich men, and Qing officials stimulated the revolutionary activity of common people. The confiscations were carried out with the participation of local poor, who were usually given a share of the clothing and food.

The manifestly anti-Manchu and anti-landlord policy of the Taipings won them the allegiance of the downtrodden labouring majority, notably the rural poor. In Daozhou and the adjoining counties of Jianhua and Yongming, captured by the rebels in July 1852 with the assistance of the local population, some 20,000 recruits joined the Taiping army. Thus reinforced, it abandoned the area in mid-August, marching north to Changsha, the chief city of Hunan province. On 17 August, after capturing several smaller towns, the Taipings fought their way into Chenzhou, a major county seat. Here their army was joined by between 20,000 and 30,000 people from the neighbouring villages and by more than a thousand coalminers, out of whom the Taipings formed sapper units. Since organising and arming the new large reinforcements called for time, the main forces of the Taiping army were compelled to tarry in the vicinity of Chen-

zhou. While they stayed there, a vanguard of more than a thousand men under Xiao Chaogui, Lin Fengxiang and Li Kaifang advanced on Changsha, and tried to break into the city on 11 September. But the attack failed. Xiao Chaogui, an outstanding organiser, was seriously wounded, and died three weeks later. All subsequent attempts of the vanguard troop to take the city by storm failed as well.

Then, on 13 October, the main forces of the Taipings arrived from Chenzhou and laid siege to Changsha. The siege dragged out to six weeks.

The Qing government, alarmed by the growing strength and successful advance of the Taiping army, sent more and more reinforcements to Hunan province. By the end of November, a considerable punitive force had converged on Changsha, exposing the Taipings to assaults from the rear. This put the Taiping army in great jeopardy. Besides, its food stores were beginning to run out. The rebels decided to lift the siege of the city, and during the night of 29 November, taking advantage of inclement weather, their main forces unnoticeably withdrew. Crossing to the western bank of the Xiangjiang, they marched north-west to Lake Dongtinghu and captured the town of Yiyang. Here a few thousand capacious fishing boats and sailing craft fell into their hands, while the local fishermen, boatmen, and sailors cast in their lot with them. The Taipings crossed Lake Dongtinghu and landed beneath the walls of strategically important Yozhou, a city on a channel that joined the lake with the Yangzi. Yozhou fell without a battle, for the Manchu governor of Hubei had fled on learning of the approach of the Taipings, and the local Qing garrison of several thousand men followed suit.

In Yozhou the Taipings came into the possession of warehouses in which large quantities of arms, including cannon, were stored since the days of the Manchu conquest of China. Besides, the rebels seized more than 5,000 privately owned river junks, and greatly increased their numbers by enlisting the poor of the neighbouring villages. As a result, the combat capacity of the Taipings grew visibly.

At Yozhou, the Taipings broke up into two columns: one boarded junks, while the other marched overland. Both headed for the heartland of Hubei province, the triple city of Wuhan. On 22 December, the overland column appeared in the southern suburbs of Wuchang. On the following day the river force occupied Hanyang on the northern bank at the confluence of the Han. Four days later, it fought its way into the near-by large city of Hankou, and on 12 January 1853 captured the fortress of Wuchang, the seat of the Hubei provincial administration. There the Taipings came into the possession of large stores of arms and food, and nearly one million *liang* of silver.

The ruling Manchu elite was stunned by the swift advance and the

spectacular military feats of the Taipings. Fearing a rebel assault on Beijing, the Qing government ordered the eightbanner troops in Henan, Shandong, and Shenxi to be readied for combat, and put the Manchu dignitary, Qishan, in command of military operations against the Taipings north of Wuhan. In the southern regions of Henan and Shandong fortifications were raised in haste to block the Taipings' way to the imperial capital. Reinforcements were rushed there, too, from Heilongjiang, Jilin, Zhili, and Gansu.

The Qing took urgent measures to prevent the Taipings from capturing the economically advanced and strategically important lower reaches of the Yangzi. Orders were issued to fortify Jiujiang (Kiu-kiang), Anqing, Nanjing, and other towns. Defence of the area was put into the hands of Lu Jianying, viceroy of Jiangxi and Jiangsu. Apart from the local troops he had, he was sent reinforcements of several thousand men and large sums of money.

The Taipings' success at Wuhan, and their policy of exterminating officials, and of putting down landlords and the rich, attracted and inspired the urban and rural poor. They flocked in large numbers to the Taiping army. But the chiefs did not use their advantage to try and take Beijing. They chose to move down the Yangzi in a bid to capture Nanjing, the biggest of the cities in the central part of the country.

Setting off on 9 February 1853, the Taiping army followed the bank of the Yangzi, while part of the troops and the women's units, and the rebels' families, boarded boats. Some 10,000 junks formed a caravan five kilometres long. The combat detachments marched along both banks, sweeping aside all obstacles. On 24 February, they took Anqing, the administrative seat of Anhui province, capturing some 200 cannon, a large amount of ammunition and food, and 300,000 *liang* of silver. At nightfall on 7 March, the advance units on the southern bank came to the outskirts of Nanjing, and four days later the Taipings surrounded the city and began digging tunnels to the city walls.

On 19 March, the Taipings lunged into Nanjing. Panic broke out among government soldiers. Many threw down their arms and ran, many surrendered. A part of the eightbanner force took cover behind the walls of the inner city, but this was occupied by the rebels the following day. No mercy was shown to Qing officials and commanders, including viceroy Lu.

Nanjing Is Made Capital of the Taiping State

Soon after the capture of Nanjing, Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing renamed it Tianjin (Heavenly Capital), and made it the capital of the Taiping state.

Government offices were opened under the direction and control of Yang, who had in effect assumed supreme powers.

The Taiping government made public a programme entitled the *Land System of the Celestial Dynasty*. The document is of interest as a statement of the social aims of the Taipings and as evidence of the anti-feudal nature of the Taiping Rebellion. Chinese feudal society was to be converted to a peculiar 'peasant socialism' providing for equality of its members in production and consumption.

The *Land System* set forth the general principles for the redistribution of cultivated land, the social, religious, and military organisation of the rural population, production and consumption, the structure of the rural administration, and its activity. The rural population of both sexes was allotted land at egalitarian quotas based on nine grades of land fertility. Children under sixteen were allowed half the adult allocation. Modest-sized, economically restricted, patriarchal para-military communities were to be formed, which would also be religious communities. Their life was to be rigidly regimented. Each community was to have a prayer-house and a general warehouse to which its members turned in all harvested produce over the subsistence minimum, and from which they received money and provisions. The communities were to consist of 25 families and to represent the basic military unit—a platoon. The platoon commander would also be community leader, religious mentor, and civil administrator. That, indeed, was the basic content of the long document. There were some vague points in the part concerning the redistribution of land: no allotment quotas were specified, nor the procedure of redistribution. Neither was it made clear whether the allotments would be given over in perpetuity or for temporary use. The *Land System* contained the utopian idea that 'inhabitants of the Heavenly Kingdom must jointly and to an equal degree enjoy the great happiness bestowed upon them by the Heavenly Father, the Lord God; possessing fields, they must work them in common; possessing food, they must imbibe of it in common; possessing clothes, they must divide them equally, and possessing money, they must spend it jointly, so that there should be no inequality in anything and so that all should have eaten and all should be clothed.'⁷ But the document did not explain how to harmonise joint tillage, joint spending of money, and joint consumption of supplies with the distribution of land to separate peasant families, which implied private farming.

The ideological sources of the document were the utopian ancient Chinese ideas of *Datong* and *Taiping*, the Confucian *Book of Rites* (*Zhouli*) and the treatise of Mencius containing a description of the ideal order that had ostensibly existed in the early stage of Chinese society.

The document as a whole was dual and contradictory. Its idea of

redistributing land on an egalitarian principle was in tune with the aspirations of land-hungry peasants, who comprised the driving power of the Taiping Rebellion, and was doubtless progressive and revolutionary. In the framework of a policy furthering capitalist relations it may have, in the conditions of the time, cleared the path for capitalism. But the plan was contingent on the utopian idea of bringing peasants into para-military patriarchal communities based on principles of a 'consumer communism'. And that made it unrealistic.

The *Land System* saw the light of day when capitalist relations did not yet exist in China. It reflected the Taipings' dream of a new, more just social system reposing on equality of all people and their joint use of the boons of nature and the results of their labour. But it also reflected their incomprehension of the objective laws of social development and of what was needed for the country's progressive advancement. This, indeed, was typical of popular movements of the medieval period when there were no classes representing a more progressive mode of production.

Qing Reaction Versus the Taiping Rebellion in 1853-1856

The striking military successes of the Taipings in the Yangzi valley, especially their swift capture of strongly fortified Nanjing, caused consternation in the camp of the feudal reactionaries. The Qing government frantically marshalled all available forces and resources. It continued concentrating troops near Nanjing and in areas along the probable line of the Taipings' advance.

On orders from the imperial capital, General Xiang Rong with 30,000 men marched on Nanjing, installing himself in late March 1853 in the township of Xiaolingwei ten kilometres south-west of the Taiping capital. Here, on the southern bank of the Yangzi he established a strongly fortified camp, and began mounting armed raids against the rebels. This southern camp, designed to keep the rebels in Nanjing in constant peril and to bar their way to Zhejiang, became the main buttress of Qing reaction south of the Yangzi. And some weeks later another large force of eightbanner troops headed by imperial commissioner Qishan installed itself in the outskirts of Yangzhou, creating a no less strongly fortified camp on the northern bank to block the Taipings' way to areas north of the Yangzi.

Doubting the eightbanner troops' ability to cope with the Taipings on their own, the Qing showered local authorities, the *shenshi*, the landlords, and merchants, with appeals to unite, to form militia

units in support of the regular army, and promised rewards to those who distinguished themselves in putting down the rebels.

The feudal lords, especially the top *shenshi*, who fawned slavishly on the Manchu nobility, did all they could to help stamp out the Taipings.

At the end of 1852, the Qing dignitary Zeng Guofan began forming a mercenary army out of landlord self-defence detachments. Known as the Hunan (or Xiang) army, it helped the government greatly in fighting the rebellion. Zeng ordered the construction of large numbers of war junks, which he armed with foreign-made cannon. Commanders were recruited from among *shenshi* and landlords personally devoted to Zeng Guofan, while the rank-and-file consisted chiefly of peasants whose loyalty was vouched for by local landowners. Political indoctrination, superior organisation and tighter discipline, coupled with use of foreign-made arms, made the relatively small Hunan army much more battleworthy than the Manchu eightbanner force. Modelled on it were the mercenary landlord armies later raised in Jiangsu, Hubei, and Anhui, all of them playing no small a part in putting down the Taiping Rebellion.

In sum, the Qing concentrated large eightbanner forces in areas where the Taipings were active, had the landlords form self-defence detachments, which were integrated in mercenary armies, and thereby amassed a large host that encircled the rebels.

But for the Qing the situation was still near disastrous. Mustering funds to pay the huge cost of the campaign was a formidable problem which the government tried to solve by raising taxes and introducing new duties—and this in places where the tax pressure was already all but insupportable. The Qing treasury was maintained, among other things, by the plunderous *lijin* tax—a system of internal trade (customs) duties first imposed in the autumn of 1853, and surviving until 1930. *Lijin* inflicted incalculable damage to the Chinese national economy, for duties were collected on all goods carted or shipped by Chinese merchants or traders at each of the countless customs posts, and then again when these goods were sold in shops. Formally the imposition amounted to something like one-tenth of a per cent of the sales price, but in fact its size depended on the discretion of local authorities. A dense rash of customs posts and *lijin* collection offices spread across the entire land.

To cover its budget deficit, the Qing began issuing large quantities of paper banknotes (*guanpiao*), exchange money (*baochao*), and copper and iron coins of large denomination (*daqian*), none of which were covered by silver reserves. The government trade in academic degrees and titles expanded to unheard-of proportions. The court resorted to all sorts of ruses to extricate itself from its financial difficulties. Naturally, this led to a further deterioration of the peo-

ple's life, and just as naturally redoubled their resistance to the authorities.

The Northern March of the Taipings

The Taiping leaders knew that the survival of the Taiping state hinged on the elimination of Manchu political rule. In the spring of 1853, they organised a march north to capture Beijing and overthrow the Qing dynasty. In mid-May 1853, a lightly-armed force of 20,000-30,000 headed by Lin Fengxiang, Li Kaifang and Ji Wenyuan set out from the Nanjing area, crossed Anhui and Henan provinces, and at the end of June began crossing the Huanghe in coal barges north-west of Kaifeng. On 7 July it encircled the strategically important town of Huaiqing. The siege lasted for some two months, but the town held out. During this period the rebel army was put in order, and reinforced by local volunteers. But the recruiting was incomparably slower than the enthusiastic inflow witnessed along the Taiping army's line of march from Guangxi to Nanjing, because, among other things, in the regions north of the Huanghe the class antagonisms were less acute, and no organised resistance to Manchu rule, no anti-Manchu secret societies, existed. Besides, the bulk of the Taipings hailed from the southern and central provinces. They did not speak the northern dialects and were unfamiliar with local customs, which handicapped propagation of their ideas.

Taking advantage of the time the Taipings lost besieging Huaiqing, the Qing fortified the southern approaches to Beijing. In addition, they deployed a large force to the Huaiqing area to menace the Taipings' rear.

Seeing that the situation was turning against them, the rebels lifted the siege of Huaiqing on 1 September and took off in a north-westerly direction. On 12 September, they seized Pingyang in the south-eastern part of Shanxi province, and continued north-east, heading for Beijing. At the end of September, they captured the guard post of Linmingguan in Zhili province and, protracting their swift raid, approached the city of Baoding 160 km south of the imperial capital. Thereupon, for some unknown reason, they veered east and on 29 October reached the large, strategically important port city of Tianjin (Tientsin), which covered the immediate approaches to the imperial capital from the south-east.

Manchu lords and officials in Beijing were in a panic. Many of them fled with their families to safer localities. The Qing court, too, was preparing for flight. Eightbanner troops were being rushed to the Tianjin area from Beijing, Manchuria, and elsewhere. Mongolian cavalry was summoned from Rehe and Chahaer. Detachments of the rural landlord militia were brought up. In fairly quick order, the Qing

indeed succeeded in concentrating at Tianjin an army several times superior in numbers and armaments to the Taipings, who were then some 40,000 strong.

The Taipings were in an unfavourable position. Far removed from their base in Nanjing, they had no way of receiving reinforcements and supplies, and maintained themselves exclusively on what they were able to capture from the enemy. Furthermore, a cold winter to which southerners were unaccustomed was approaching fast.

Still, they comported themselves with the usual fearlessness. They decided to encamp for the winter a few dozen kilometres from Tianjin, and wait there for reinforcements from Nanjing. But food supplies in the area ran low, and there were the daily, almost continual, attacks of the numerically superior adversary to contend with. Bitter fighting in the vicinity of Tianjin went on ceaselessly for more than two months. The Taipings lost strength in each skirmish, while the enemy army was being constantly enlarged. Finally, on 5 February 1854, with their food supplies and ammunition almost completely exhausted, they abandoned their positions pounded by the enormous enemy army, and began withdrawing south. During the retreat, Ji Wenyuan and many other commanders and soldiers were killed. In early May, the Taipings installed themselves in the town of Lianzhen. Word had come that help was on its way from Nanjing. Li Kaifang led 2,000 horsemen out of the town to meet the reinforcements, leaving Lin Fengxiang in charge of the army in Lianzhen.

In the beginning of February 1854, Yang Xiuqing had, indeed, sent a few Taiping auxiliary detachments to the aid of the army in the North. In the month of March, they crossed unmolested to the northern bank of the Huanghe, entered Shandong province and, routing a large Manchu force a month later, occupied the town of Linqing 150 km south of Lianzhen. Fearing encirclement, they then retreated south. Their retreat was disorderly, and soon they were nearly all slain by Manchu troops.

Meanwhile, the greatly depleted troops of Li Kaifang and Lin Fengxiang found themselves isolated from each other. Lin's column, encircled by a large enemy force, held out in besieged Lianzhen for ten months. In March 1855, the Manchus took the town by assault. Lin was taken prisoner and transported to Beijing in a wooden cage. His execution took place on 15 March. Li Kaifang's detachment, too, was in desperate straits. In May 1855, it was compelled to surrender. Taken prisoner and carted to Beijing, Li and his closest companions were executed on 11 June.

That was the tragic end of the Taipings' northern march, which nevertheless demonstrated their heroism, fearlessness, stamina, and dedication to the hope of a better future for the people of China. This failure had disastrous consequences for the Taiping Rebellion.

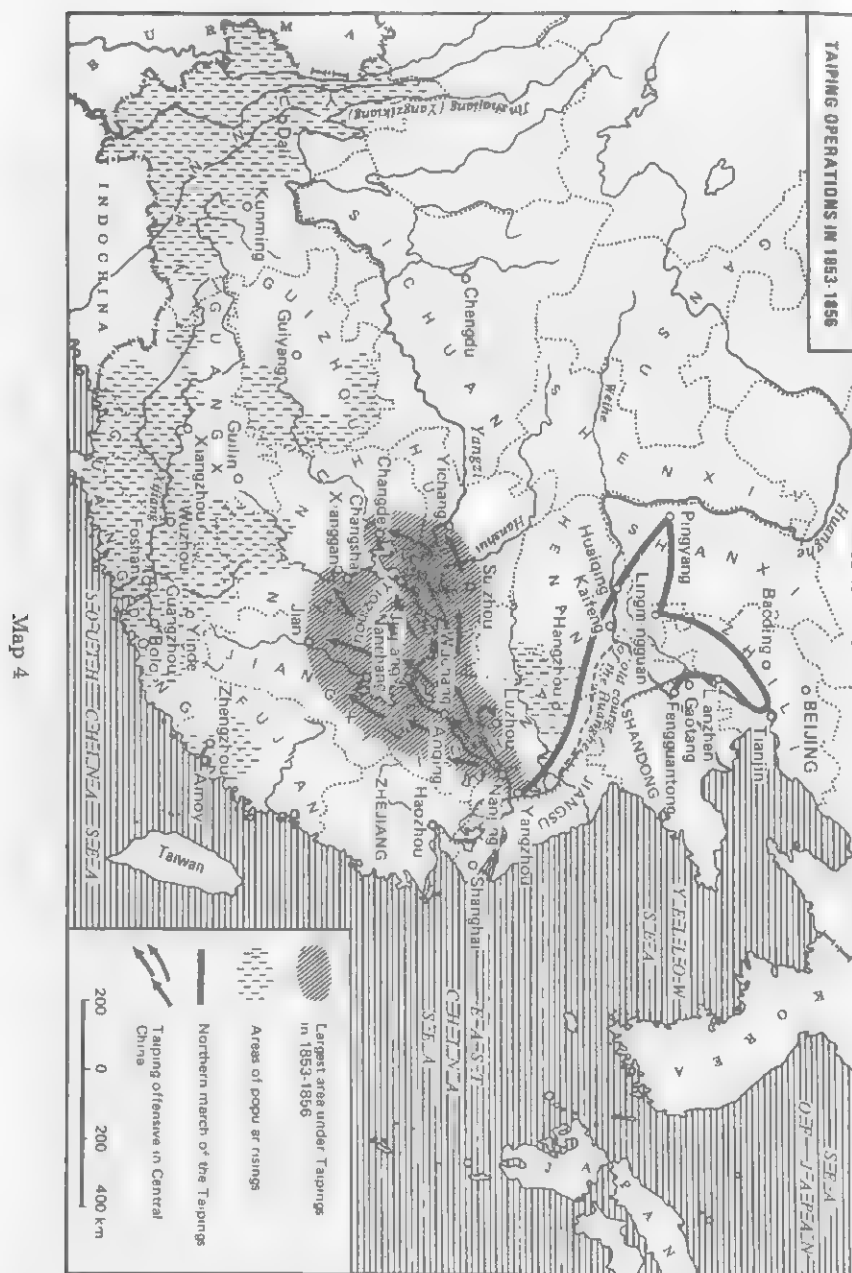
It comforted and encouraged the Manchu-Chinese feudalists, and gave them a chance to buttress their positions and then go on the offensive in the central provinces.

The Drive to Expand the Territory of the Taiping State in 1853-1856

While the northern march proceeded, the Taipings also carried out large-scale offensive operations in the middle reaches of the Yangzi west of Nanjing with the aim of gaining command of that large area. Known as the western march of the Taipings, these operations began in the latter half of May 1853, with several tens of thousands of rebels setting out on numerous river-craft up the Yangzi, capturing riverside towns and leaving behind garrisons. On 19 May, the Taipings seized Hezhou, on 10 June the town of Anqing, administrative seat of Anhui province, and on 18 June the town of Hukou. Thereupon, they turned south along a canal joining the Yangzi with Lake Poyanghu. Two days later they arrived beneath the walls of Nanchang, the administrative seat of Jiangxi province. They did not succeed in capturing the city on the march, and laid siege to it, while fanning out to capture a considerable part of the province. The routes by which the besieged could have received reinforcements and food supplies were cut off, and the rebels hoped that hunger would make them surrender. But at the close of September, on orders from Yang Xiuqing, the main rebel contingents were recalled from Nanchang to Hukou and Anqing for new offensive operations (Map 4).

In October and November, the Taipings developed an offensive from Anqing north to the city of Luzhou, the provisional headquarters of the Qing provincial administration of Anhui. Clearing a considerable part of the province of Manchu troops and landlord militia, the Taipings approached Luzhou in December 1853, and captured it by storm after a month's siege. Soon, the rebels were in control of 22 counties and commanderies of Anhui province.

In the meantime, another Taiping force launched a drive up the Yangzi from the Hukou area. In the latter half of October 1853 it took possession of the cities of Hankou and Hanyang, but in early November was compelled to abandon the two cities and dig in in the vicinity, because a considerable contingent was drawn off to Anhui province and the area east of Nanjing to help the Taiping garrison of Yangzhou, which was besieged by troops from the Manchu camp on the northern bank of the Yangzi and was experiencing acute shortages of food and ammunition. By the end of December, a large Taiping detachment fought its way into Yangzhou and helped the be-



sieged evacuate to the neighbouring Guazhou area, where they consolidated their positions.

Not until the beginning of 1854 did the Taiping troops in the vicinity of Hankou, strengthened by reinforcements, resume their offensive. On 12 February, a force of 40,000 routed a large Manchu army at the approaches to Hankou and Hanyang, and retook the two cities four days later. Thereupon, Taiping detachments mounted an offensive north and north-west of Hankou and swiftly cleared a large section of Hubei province. Meanwhile, other rebel units sailed up the Yangzi, captured the town of Yozhou, reached Lake Dongtinghu, and entered Hunan province. Here they broke up into two columns, one landing in Jinggang harbour 30 km north-west of Changsha, while the other sailed across the lake, went up the Xiangjiang, and took the town of Xianggan south of Changsha. As a result, Hunan province and its administrative centre lay exposed to rebel attack.

The feudalists of Hunan headed by Zeng Guofan mustered all the strength they could to drive the Taipings out. Nearly the entire ground force and river fleet of the Hunan army were ordered by Zeng to converge on Xianggan. The fighting, which took a heavy toll in lives, lasted for nearly a week and ended in defeat for the Taiping troops. On losing their entire fleet of junks and suffering heavy losses, they abandoned Xianggan on 1 May 1854, and retreated in separate detachments to Jinggang and Jiangxi province.

For the Taipings, thus, the situation was growing more and more complicated. Their capital Nanjing was, in effect, blockaded from the land by Qing troops of the southern camp, which endlessly raided the outskirts of the city.

At Yozhou and Wuhan, too, the Taipings were soon compelled to go on the defensive. By the end of July, the greatly strengthened Hunan army under Zeng Guofan, encouraged by its victory at Xianggan, drove the Taipings out of Yozhou. Forfeiting the initiative, the Taipings retreated fighting to Wuhan. By mid-October that large city was threatened by the Hunan army from south and south-east, and by another large Manchu force from the north. On 14 October, as the enemy approached, the Taipings abandoned Wuhan without resistance.

Lacking the requisite fleet to oppose the enemy navy armed with foreign-made guns, the rebels withdrew down the Yangzi to the vicinity of Tianjiazhen, which covered the distant approaches to Jiujiang and Hukou. Bitter fighting ensued in the area, lasting for nearly a month. On 2 December, the river-borne forces of the Hunan army demolished the barrier put up by the rebels across the Yangzi, and destroyed the Taiping fleet of 3,000 craft in a sudden assault. The Taipings were thus deprived of supremacy on the river, which had earlier ensured them brilliant military success. They withdrew to

Jiujiang on the southern bank of the Yangzi and into Anhui province on the northern.

But following the arrival of large rebel reinforcements under Shi Dakai in early 1855, the situation in the middle reaches of the Yangzi gradually changed in favour of the Taipings. Under Shi's command the rebels on the northern bank mounted a resolute offensive and regained the eastern part of Hubei province. On 23 February, they captured Hanyang for the fourth time, took Wuchang on 3 April, and again consolidated their positions in that strategically important area.

In late November, Shi started large-scale offensive operations in Jiangxi province. Jointly with the forces of secret societies that had arrived from Guangdong, he occupied more than 50 counties by the the spring of 1856, though the Qing retained control over the larger part of the province and notably over Nanchang, the provincial capital.

There were also major Taiping victories east of Nanjing. In early April 1856, the rebels smashed the enemy's northern camp at Yangzhou, and on 17 June units under Qin Rigang, jointly with Shi Dakai's detachments, attacked the Qing troops of the southern camp in the vicinity of Nanjing. The Manchu army was crushed in four days of bitter fighting, its panic-stricken remnants fleeing south-east to Danyang, while Qing commander Xiang Rong committed suicide. This relieved the Taiping capital of the enemy blockade and the threat of an attack.

As a result of its operations in Central China, the Taiping army captured part of Jiangsu and Hubei provinces, and the larger part of Anhui and Jiangxi. This fairly large area on both banks of the Yangzi, freed from Qing rule, became the heartland of the Taiping state.

The Power System of the Taipings

The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace was conceived as a peasant state serving above all the interests of the dispossessed and down-trodden sections of the feudal society, and putting down hostile class forces. But the peasantry did not, nor could, become the economically dominant class. The premises for a revolutionary replacement of the feudal by the capitalist system were, in substance, lacking in the China of that time. Owing to their historically conditioned limitations, peasants could not by themselves create any new social and political system outside the limits of feudalism. Not surprisingly, therefore, they drew their ideas from a remote past, which they visualised as ideal.

The Taiping political system was based on the monarchic principle

with the traditional hierarchy of titles and ranks. This was a clear reflection of the class limitations of the feudal peasantry, of its naive belief in paternalistic royalty, its faith in the immutability of the monarchic form of government, and in what ultimately depended on the personal qualities of the ruler—how 'good' he was or how 'bad'. The ruling elite of the Taiping state consisted of hereditary princes headed by Heavenly Prince Hong Xiuquan—an absolute monarch with supreme legislative and executive powers. It was assumed that all the other princes merely advised the Heavenly Prince and helped him in running the state. But in fact the greater share of supreme authority had been seized by the 'herald of God's will', Eastern Prince Yang Xiuqing, who also styled himself 'tutor of the army, consoler, and redeemer of pain'.

The titled nobility also included relatives of the princes, who bore the honorary denomination of *guo zong* (state families) and the hereditary title of *hou* (lower than that of prince) instituted in 1853, following the capture of Nanjing. Like the princes, they held the highest offices in the civil administration and the armed forces. Below this titled nobility were the many grades of a bureaucratic hierarchy.

Unlike the feudal nobility of the Qing state, nearly all bearers of hereditary titles and high official ranks hailed from the common people. They had no landed property and lived on what was regularly issued to them at defined quotas (depending on title or rank) from the 'sacred stores' of the state. But their privileged position enabled them to take charge of considerable monies and valuables.

The structure of the top executive bodies was ill defined and lacked stability. There was no strict apportionment of functions among the various echelons. A large body of high-ranking officials served at the court of the head of state, Hong Xiuquan. The court of each of the other princes had a governmental Chancellery in addition to the usual court services. The chancelleries consisted of the six departments that were traditional in feudal China—the departments of ranks, taxes, rites, military affairs, punishments, and public works. They formed a system of supreme executive bodies, with the functions of the central government being assigned to the governmental chancellery of Yang Xiuqing, inasmuch as he was second in position and influence to the head of state.

The system of local administration was better defined and more stable. The top rung of the ladder was represented by the chiefs of commanderies, who had a regional administration under them. Then came the chiefs of counties with their own county administrations, which controlled the rural administrations of various levels modelled on military lines and consisting of officials ranked as army commanders and commanders of divisions, brigades, companies, and

platoons. The regional and county chiefs were appointed by the supreme bodies of authority, and they, in turn, appointed the officials of the rural administrations.

The Taiping leaders did not hesitate to enlist *shenshi*, feudal scholars, even landlords who had not publicly sided with the Qing, in local, especially rural, administrations. Many landlords were, indeed, quite willing to take the jobs, either because they supported the anti-Manchu aims of the rebels or because they sought to save their life, land, and property, and avoid paying burdensome taxes and indemnities. The presence of landlord elements in local Taiping administrations had a deleterious effect on the class consciousness and anti-feudal revolutionary fervour of the peasants, while affording landlords an opportunity to use their official position for selfish ends to the detriment of the labouring mass of the people.

To select candidates to official posts, the Taipings retained the traditional system of civil service examinations. They introduced it after Nanjing was made the capital of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. The examinations were approximately the same as those practised in China for many hundreds of years; only the codified subject matter of the essays was altered, with examinees eulogising the Christian God, the Taiping princes, and the Taiping state. But the Taipings abolished quotas and other restrictions and admitted, sometimes forcibly, all educated people—the *shenshi* and the landlords.

The Taiping treasury issued its own copper coin, but Qing money was in wide circulation.

The Taipings proclaimed the Christian faith as understood and preached by Hong Xiuquan the sole true religion, propagated it widely, outlawed the propagation of any other, notably the traditionally Chinese, religious beliefs, and persecuted any clerical institution that engaged in such propagation. This religious intolerance was well exploited by the feudal authorities, who accused the rebels of tearing up China's ages-old spiritual values. This cost the Taipings the support not only of the *shenshi* gentry, bearer of Confucian traditions, but also of many devotees of traditional faiths among the common people.

The Taiping government outlawed the smoking of opium and tobacco, drunkenness, debauchery, and gambling. The measures of emancipating womanhood, notably the ban on the ugly feudal customs of foot-binding, sale of brides, bringing up of girl brides in the home of the future husband, and prostitution, were especially praiseworthy.

But through a number of other acts the Taiping rulers revived some of the worst traditions of the feudal Dragon Throne. The common people were strictly prohibited to use yellow or red

colours for their clothes: these were the privilege of people of rank. All people, including officials of lower rank, along the route of passage of a prince or high-ranking official were obliged on pain of death to withdraw to the wayside and prostrate themselves.

In sum, the rebellious peasantry proved incapable of setting up a state that would transcend the framework of the traditional feudal system with its social hierarchy and division of people into privileged and unprivileged. Still, the Taiping state was incomparably more progressive than that of the Qing.

The Social and Economic Policy of the Taiping Rulers

The Taipings tried to put their ideals, as set forth in the *Land System of the Celestial Dynasty*, into practice chiefly in the capital, Nanjing. And for a time, a short time, they succeeded.

All means of production, all artisan enterprises and all shops, all land and all buildings were transferred to the state without compensation; the population, and the commanders and soldiers of the Taiping army were forbidden to have any property or any large sums of money. On Yang Xiuqing's orders, the adult male population of Nanjing was temporarily segregated from the female; marriages were temporarily suspended 'to preclude dissipation'. But the ban did not extend to princes and other persons of high rank. All women, save the wives, concubines, and daughters of dignitaries, were placed together with children of both sexes in labour camps organised on military principles. They lived in hostels in units of twenty-five. Women skilled in needlework formed special camps, where they made Taiping flags and banners, uniforms for officials and soldiers, and so on. Under control of their women-chiefs, inmates carried rice from the riverside to the warehouses, harvested crops in the environs of Nanjing, dug ditches, repaired the city walls, and performed various other duties.

Part of the able-bodied male population of Nanjing was formed into platoons, companies, brigades, and divisions, and placed into male labour camps according to their occupations. There were camps of carpenters, metal workers, weavers, shoemakers, tailors, needleworkers, printers, and engravers. Their products went to the 'sacred stores'. Some also performed auxiliary duties at government institutions and for the Taiping army.

The rest of the able-bodied male population, excepting officials and soldiers, were put into work teams at the courts of princes and other titled persons. There were teams of builders, litter carriers, watchmakers, shipbuilders, butchers, and the like, as well as ar-

mourers and munition makers, makers of battle-standards, headgear, domestic utensils, adornments, umbrellas, fans, chops (seals), litters, and so on. Nearly all their produce went to the 'sacred stores'. The work teams, too, were modelled on military lines, but the size of each did not, as a rule, exceed one or two companies.

Disabled and old men lived in shelters. (Inmates had at first numbered 7,000 or 8,000, but later dwindled to some 3,000. By the summer of 1854, many of the shelters were closed.) Disabled and old women lived in labour camps along with the able-bodied women. Like the inmates of male shelters, they often took part in production, performing lighter jobs.

Inmates of labour camps, both male and female, and members of work teams received no wages. They received requisite food supplies and clothing at defined quotas free of charge from the 'sacred stores' on an equal footing with the men and officers of the Taiping army. In addition, like the soldiers, they were given a weekly cash allowance from the 'sacred stores' known as rest-day money (*libai qian*) and a monthly sum to buy vegetables.

At first, indeed, the Taiping authorities had outlawed all trade within the city; it was allowed exclusively at markets outside the city walls. But since this proved inconvenient for townsmen, a network of state-run retail outlets was soon set up, separately for men and for women. These shops dealt in food products, fabrics, and other necessities supplied by the 'sacred stores' and sold for cash.

The 'nationalisation' of artisan manufactories and of trade, based on militarisation of society and destruction of family, did not last for long. In March 1855, Yang Xiuqing was compelled by the pressing demands of rank-and-file Taipings and the intemperance caused by the segregation of males and females, to permit civilians in the Taiping capital to live in families. As a result, the female and many of the male labour camps and work teams were dissolved.

No 'nationalisation' of artisan manufactories and commerce occurred in any other cities in conquered territory. Only when needed, work teams were formed to manufacture arms and ammunition for the army. Outside of Nanjing, in fact, the Taipings did not interfere with the old social and economic arrangements.

Indeed, in the marginal lands of their domain the Taiping authorities encouraged artisan enterprise and trade. They prosecuted profiteering, and prohibited the use of incomplete strings of copper coins in commercial transactions to preclude cheating.

To end abuses in the salt trade, they established a salt monopoly and supplied salt to the public at low prices. Part of the expropriated property of the rich was sold at half the usual price. The authorities purchased cotton and cotton fabrics in cotton-growing areas and sold them cheaply in other places.

The practical agrarian policy of the Taipings differed substantially from the principles of their *Land System*. Landownership and tenant relations were not tampered with. Usually, landlords, mostly owners of small or medium-sized holdings, who had not publicly sided with the Qing, were not molested. But Qing officials (with the exception of those who went over to the rebels' camp), the nobility, and the landed gentry that had fought on the Manchu side, were treated in the same merciless fashion as in the initial period of the rebellion, and all their movable property was confiscated. Their houses were searched with the help of the local poor and of client tenants. All valuables and food stocks were expropriated. Land belonging to landlords, nobles, and officials slain by the Taipings was, as a rule, turned over into the possession of client tenants, who thus became independent peasants. Besides, many tenants were relieved of paying rent, and found themselves independent, because the owner of the land they tilled had fled to Qing-controlled areas.

In many cases, naturally with the permission of the Taiping authorities, tenants paid no rent to landlords who had stayed in Taiping-occupied territory. Instead, they paid a small tax to the Taipings.

The Taipings were unable to abolish landlord holdings due to the narrow historically conditioned class outlook of the peasantry and the latter's inability to transcend the framework of relationships prevailing in the feudal environment. That, too, was one of the reasons for the inconsistency of the Taipings, for the difference between their agrarian programme and their agrarian policy, and for the absence of a definitive approach to the landlord class as a whole.

But though the Taipings did little or nothing to destroy the system of large landed estates and to transfer all land to the peasants, their policy did undermine the positions of the landlord class. Landlords in the rebel areas no longer dared to oppress peasants or charge excessive rents. They were subjected to various restrictions, and paid the Taiping authorities considerable indemnities and a high 'special tax'. Though the Taipings readily granted landlords and the *shenshi* gentry academic degrees and appointed them to offices in rural administrations, the bulk remained a class force hostile to the rebels if only because of having forfeited their former economic and political power. The Taipings abolished many of the taxes and duties the peasants had had to pay before. Their basic land tax was much lower than that of the Qing. They concerned themselves with the growth of agriculture, saw to the maintenance of irrigation schemes and dams, encouraged cultivation of silkworms, and stimulated other branches of farming.

To sum up, the Taipings' social and economic policy in the country-

side was designed to eliminate those of the landlords and officials who actively sided with the Qing, to restrict exploitation of the poor, to shift the main burden of taxes from peasants to propertied elements, and to stimulate farming. And this policy won them the support of the mass of peasants, enabling them to entrench themselves in a fairly large area in the central part of the country.

The Capitalist Powers and the Taipings

The civil war that was sweeping China and threatening to wipe out the decaying Manchu regime, attracted concentrated attention among the ruling elements of Britain, France, and the United States, who began devising plans for using the situation with the greatest advantage to themselves. In February 1853, when the Taiping army was on its victorious march from Wuhan to Nanjing, Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British consul in Shanghai, wrote in a report to the Governor of Hong Kong, and British commissioner for Chinese affairs, George Bonham, that the situation was favourable for an all-out thrust into remote and forbidden regions of inland China.

These plans were encouraged by the comportment of Qing authorities in Shanghai. Wu Jianzhang, the *taotai* or intendant of the port city, purchased 13 ships from the Portuguese in Macao in March 1853, and chartered four British and American merchant vessels (with crews) to be urgently converted into warships and used against the Taipings. At about the same time he requested the British, French, and American consuls in Shanghai to send a naval squadron to the Nanjing area to help the Qing army. Reporting the request to Bonham, Alcock suggested that Britain should, on its own account or jointly with France and the U.S.A., immediately intervene in the civil war in China and occupy some important points along the Yangzi, notably Zhenjiang, to establish direct diplomatic ties with Beijing, wrest new privileges from the Qing, get the opium trade legalised, and impose new unequal treaties as compensation for the military aid rendered the Manchus. On 21 March 1853, Bonham came to Shanghai aboard a naval vessel. But it was clear that at that time a small Western squadron would not have turned the tables in the civil war, and would only have complicated matters for the Western powers if the Taipings emerged victorious, while there could be no question of Britain and France sending a more considerable force because they were busy preparing for war against Russia. The United States, meanwhile, preferred not to get embroiled in a dubious military adventure in China on its own.

In view of this, British diplomats went from plans of direct intervention to a pose of 'strict neutrality'. On 7 April, on Bonham's

instructions, the British consulate in Shanghai informed Wu Jiangzhang that Britain would render the Qing no direct military support and would concern itself exclusively with the protection of the lives and property of its subjects in China.

Fearing a Taiping attack on Shanghai and the International Settlement there, Britain, France, and the United States brought up six warships. In mid-April, the British, French, and American consuls in Shanghai held a series of conferences and decided to defend the city jointly.

Thereupon, Bonham set out on an official visit to Nanjing to inform the Taipings of Britain's neutrality, and to determine their intentions vis-à-vis the Western powers in the event of an attack on Shanghai. Furthermore, he intended to obtain the Taipings' confirmation of the unequal treaties and agreements, and to reconnoitre the rebel camp. Arriving in Nanjing on 27 April, one of Bonham's lieutenants met Wei Changhui and Shi Dakai. To the Briton's announcement of neutrality and refusal to help the Qing government, Wei Changhui replied that it would be a mistake, even a useless venture, for foreigners to render any aid to the Manchus, because the Taipings were being helped by God himself, and no one could effectively oppose Him. Asked about the Taipings' intentions, Wei, who saw the British first of all as 'co-religionists', replied that peace and friendship would be likely to prevail between the Taipings and Britain. Referring to the procedure of George Bonham's meeting with Hong Xiuquan, Wei said that since Hong was God's second son (after Jesus Christ), he was ruler of the world and all nations should revere him and pay homage to him during an audience. The same was set out in the message of the Taiping government handed to Bonham that day. The document, which demonstrated the rebel leaders' complete ignorance of international affairs and their religious fervour, was instantly sent back as unacceptable to a representative of a sovereign state.

On 1 May 1853, having failed to obtain Taiping reassurances in the event of an attack on Shanghai, and much less any confirmation of the Nanjing Treaty of 1842 and of other unequal treaties, Bonham departed from Nanjing. Before leaving, he sent the Taipings a note warning that if they infringed on the rights of Britain and its subjects in the five open ports, it would at once punish the culprits 'in the same manner as similar injuries were resented ten years ago, resulting in the capture of Chin Kiang, Nanking, and the neighbouring cities, and in the Nanking Treaty of Peace'.⁶

The French, too, made contact with the Taiping authorities. In December 1853, French commissioner in China, A. Bourboulon, visited the Taiping capital aboard a warship. He had an hour's talk with Qin Rigang. Bourboulon informed the Taiping leader of the

rights and privileges France had in China under agreements with the Qing government, and made clear that France would maintain neutrality in the Taiping-Qing conflict. He also tried to gain for his country the right to protect the interests of Catholics in China. But Qin declined to comment on French claims under the unequal treaties and said the Taipings did not molest Catholics. Bourboulon was given no assurances of any advantage to the French colonialists, and left Nanjing a few days later.

The U.S. representative in China, Robert M. McLane, was still less successful. When he arrived in Nanjing aboard a warship in early June 1854 and stated his wish of meeting the head of the Taiping government, Yang Xiuqing, a Taiping spokesman informed him that if he wanted to see Yang he would have to abide by the appropriate rites, and that the head of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace, Hong Xiuquan, was to be regarded as the true ruler of all countries who would condescend to accept tribute from them each year provided they served him faithfully. McLane saw that it was useless negotiating with the Taipings and soon departed. But his voyage gave him and his companions an opportunity to convince themselves that the Taipings had enough strength and resources to triumph on the scale of the whole country. In a report to the U.S. State Department, McLane expressed his considered opinion that if the Taipings won, they would not recognise the unequal treaties and agreements.

For reasons similar to McLane's, the new British plenipotentiary in China, Governor-General of Hong Kong John Bowring, abstained from meeting representatives of the Taiping government when visiting Nanjing at the end of June and in early July 1854. He tried to obtain answers to questions that disturbed the British government. On the question of commercial ties with other countries, the Taipings stated that they were prepared to trade with Britain and any other country because all people were brothers, and that only the opium trade was forbidden.

Henceforth, Western diplomatic representatives paid no more calls on Nanjing and had no other direct contacts with the Taiping government. But British, American, and French merchants regularly went to Taiping-occupied areas and carried on commerce.

We may gather from the above that the Taipings, unlike the Qing, were not inclined to isolate China from the outside world. In the belief that there was religious community with Europeans, and seeing them as 'brothers in Christ', the Taipings were prepared to have peaceful and friendly relations with the Western capitalist powers, though they did not seem to want continuous diplomatic ties.

Initially, the prevailing circumstances compelled Britain, France, and the United States to declare a policy of neutrality. But being aware that the Taiping state would prove an obstacle to their aggres-

sive aims in China, they went back on their assurances, and, in effect, supplied arms and equipment to the Manchu for use against the Taipings and other risings of the people.

Popular Risings Under the Direction of Secret Societies in 1853-1856

The abolition by the Taipings of Qing power in the central part of the country gave tremendous impulse to the many secret societies and to the anti-Manchu struggle of the Chinese people everywhere in the country. A wave of popular risings swept many Chinese provinces in 1853-1856, undermining Qing rule and helping the Taipings to consolidate. The biggest of the risings were the guerrilla war of the *nianjun* (the Nian army) in Anhui, Henan, and Hubei provinces, headed by the Niandang secret societies; the armed actions of the Xiaodaohui (Small Sword society) and Hongqianhui (Red Coins society) in Fujian; the rising in Shanghai fomented by the local branch of the Small Sword society, and the many peasant insurrections in Guangdong under the direction of various secret societies.

The Nian movement derived its strength from the village poor and dispossessed elements living on casual earnings. But its guerrilla war was joined by anti-Manchu landlords, *shenshi*, rich peasants, and even some local officials. Mixed in social background and lacking a centralised leadership, the Niandang societies had no orderly political or social-economic programme. The motive that brought their members together was that of deposing the Manchu.

The *nianjun* war erupted in November 1852 with an armed uprising of peasants in Zhiheji (Anhui province) under leaders Zhang Luoxing and Gong Deshu. By the end of the year, the number of rebel detachments in localities near Haozhou (Anhui) and Yongcheng (Henan) rose to nearly a score. In the winter of 1852-1853 they united and chose Zhang chief commander. By the autumn of 1853, the Nian had lit the torch in many parts of Anhui and Henan. At times, the number of guerrillas touched 100,000. Other rebel detachments sprang up, as a rule, on the clan principle or consisted of people from the same home area. They had no umbrella organisation and no centralised leadership. Each acted on its own.

Taking advantage of the preoccupation of Qing troops with the Taipings, the Nian attacked county and prefectural towns, executed Qing administrators, and seized food and property. This was typically guerrilla warfare, with the men quickly gathering into detachments, making their audacious raids, then dispersing swiftly and assuming the appearance of peaceful civilians. But the unco-ordinated, highly fluid detachments had lax discipline, and were poorly armed. As a

rule, they were not able to stand up to regular troops.

The Qing authorities were disturbed by the scale of this guerrilla war in their hinterland, and in the spring of 1854 assigned troops and landlord militia units to suppress the *nianjun*. In the latter half of 1854, the Nian were dogged by defeats. A few of their biggest detachments were wiped out.

In 1855, the scattered *nianjun* detachments formed a temporary union to fight the enemy in common. In August, their leaders gathered in Zhiheji to inaugurate a rebel alliance, the Great Han Kingdom. Zhang Luoxing was made head of the alliance, and a number of other leaders, were elected. The rebel force was divided into ten large units, each of which was conferred a banner of a different colour.

The alliance issued an appeal calling on the people to rise against tyrants and traitors and save the tormented country. It also drew up the *nianjun*'s code of behaviour in action, which forbade pillage and ill treatment of peaceful civilians on pain of death. The Zhiheji conference was a big move towards unity, though in the final analysis the *nianjun* proved unable to completely overcome their deep-rooted divisions and spontaneity.

The guerrilla war of the Nian was part of the general floodtide of anti-Manchu and anti-feudal feeling, of which the peasant war of the Taipings was the most conspicuous manifestation. Drawing off considerable enemy forces and wreaking havoc behind enemy lines, the *nianjun* contributed substantially to the successes of the Taiping army.

The same was true of the popular risings in Fujian led by the anti-Manchu Small Sword and Red Coins secret societies. These two societies, whose aim it was to replace the Qing with the Ming dynasty, consisted chiefly of peasants, artisans, vendors, fishermen, and boatmen. Counting several thousand members each, they were essentially local organisations. Seizing on the disaffection of the people badgered by the rule of Manchu feudalists and the mounting taxes and other pressures, and exploiting the fact that the bulk of Qing troops had been moved from Fujian against the Taipings, the chiefs of the Small Sword society, Huang Demei and Huang Wei, started an armed rising on 14 May 1853. The rebels captured the town of Haideng, and dealt summarily with the local Qing officials. They met no resistance to speak of, and took possession of several Fujian towns within a week, including the large port of Amoy. The chief of the Red Coins society, Lin Jun, also formed armed groups of his followers and captured a few towns. In sum, southern and part of central Fujian fell under rebel control.

At the end of May 1853, the Qing sent a naval force to recapture Amoy. The sea-borne attack was repulsed with heavy losses for the

attackers. But the rebels, moved by localist sentiment, confined themselves to tearing down the Manchu administration in just the areas adjoining the port. Thereupon, they ceased offensive operations and waited for developments. The leaders of neither secret society had the requisite insight. They acted separately, and did not apply themselves enough to consolidating and developing their initial success. At the end of July 1853, Qing troops, with reinforcements from Guangdong, renewed their offensive on Amoy, the key rebel stronghold. Fierce fighting ensued, lasting for over two months. In October, supported by landlord plotters inside the city, the Qing crushed rebel resistance. Breaking into the port, the frenzied soldiers visited plunder and carnage on anyone who happened to be in their way. More than a thousand peaceful civilians were slain.

Following the fall of Amoy, Huang Demei with part of the surviving rebels retreated to Longxi, where he was captured and killed. His mate Huang Wei and the rest of the survivors got away from Amoy on junks and reached the open sea. They entrenched themselves on the Penghuliedao (Pescadore) islands in the Taiwan Strait, and for a number of years raided and harassed the Fujian shore, until they were finally beaten by the Qing in 1858. Meanwhile, detachments led by Lin Jun retreated south to the mountains of Fujian, where they continued their guerrilla war. In 1858, when the Taipings entered the northern part of Fujian province, Lin and a modest-sized detachment of rebels headed north to join them, but were ambushed on the way by the landlord militia: the force was destroyed and Lin killed in battle.

In the early autumn of 1853, during the Qing siege of Amoy, a popular rising erupted in the Shanghai area, headed by the local branch of the Small Sword society consisting chiefly of people hailing from Guangdong—a few thousand artisans, sailors and boatmen, vendors, and *declassé* elements. The rising began on 7 September. Led by the chief of the society, Liu Lichuan, the rebels quickly seized Shanghai without losses. Their slogan, like that of most secret societies, was 'Overthrow the Qing, and restore the Ming'. On 18 September, Liu sent a letter to the head of the Taiping state, Hong Xiuquan, begging him to consider his force part of the Taiping army and to appoint officials in Shanghai. Involved in their northern and western marches, however, the Taipings left the Shanghai rebels without assistance.

There were something like 20,000 rebels in Shanghai, wearing red headbands to distinguish them from civilians. They maintained strict order in the city, cutting short all pillage and violence, and showing no mercy to the culprits. Their leaders announced that no taxes would be collected from the population for three years, and forbade traders to raise the price of their goods.

The Qing government attached great strategic importance to Shanghai, from where it received a sizeable portion of funds for its troops fighting the Taipings. In mid-September 1853, it sent a large force to put down the Shanghai rising. Towards the end of the month, the city was besieged by a well-armed Manchu army. The rebels displayed courage and tenacity in defending their citadel.

But as the siege dragged out, lacking help from outside, the condition of Shanghai's defenders deteriorated. Besides, the Qing reactionaries were aided by the Western powers, who reneged on the 'neutrality' they had earlier proclaimed. Making the most of the situation, the British, French, and Americans obtained Qing consent to having their representatives take part in running the Maritime Customs in Shanghai, and, in effect, gained complete control of it. Thereupon with the tacit agreement of the Manchus, they circumvented the existing treaties to set up an Anglo-French-American administration in the Shanghai settlement, with its own police and judiciary, and its own tax offices and other institutions. This amounted to removal of the territory from Chinese jurisdiction and its conversion into a state within a state.

The powers' aid to the Qing became more and more candid. In June 1854, they told the rebels they should leave Shanghai. Though the suggestion was turned down, it created disarray in the rebel camp. A part of the rebels (chiefly natives of Fujian) did leave the city and surrendered to the enemy. They were followed by many of the vendors who had initially joined the rebellion. Though this reduced rebel strength, they continued their tenacious resistance. From December 1854 on, the armed forces of the Western powers, especially those of France, threw down all pretences and went into the field on the side of the Qing troops. The French bombarded the Shanghai citadel. More, in January 1855 they managed to break into it, but were driven out by the rebels. On the night of 16 February, their supplies of food and ammunition exhausted, the rebels tried to break out. Many, including Liu Lichuan, died in battle. Small units succeeded in getting out of the besieged city. Some soon joined the Taiping army, others fought their way to Jiangsu province, where they fell in with local rebel groups operating under the guidance of secret societies. This spelled the end of the heroic popular uprising in Shanghai, which had lasted for more than 17 months.

An armed insurrection on a still greater scale occurred in the province of Guangdong, where there were secret societies of long standing known by the general name of Tiandihui (the Triad). These dispersed local societies made up of people from different walks of life—village paupers, artisans, street vendors, tramps, anti-Manchu *shenshi*, and landlords—had been forming armed detachments throughout 1850 to 1853, loosening insurrections now here now there.

From the summer of 1854 on, stimulated by the success of the Taiping war and the mounting anti-Manchu sentiment in the country, they became increasingly active. On 17 June 1854, the chief of one of the societies, He Lu, gathered 30,000 followers (mainly peasants, boatmen, and fishermen) and captured the county town of Dongguan. On 5 July, the detachment of Chen Kai, chief of another secret society, seized control of the town of Foshanzhen in the vicinity of Guangzhou, the provincial capital. He was soon joined by detachments of other secret societies headed by an itinerant actor, Li Wenmou, and on 13 July the united rebel force mounted an offensive on Guangzhou. This sparked armed risings all over Guangdong. In a short time, many prefectural and county towns were in the hands of rebel groups formed by various local secret societies. One of the detachments captured a county in Guangxi province.

The numbers of the rebel force rose to a few hundred thousand. But they were poorly armed, poorly organised, and discipline was lax. They operated without co-ordination, acting on their own, and confining themselves mainly to destroying the Qing administration in just their own county or prefecture.

As a result of the widespread popular risings, the authority of the Qing in Guangdong was on the brink of collapse. Government troops in different parts of the province were isolated from each other by rebel detachments. Embattled Guangzhou was soon beset by an acute shortage of food, arms, and ammunition. But at that point, the Western powers came to the rescue of the reactionary Qing. They shipped in large quantities of food to the blockaded city from India, Singapore, and elsewhere, and helped the viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, Ye Mingchen, to buttress the defences of Guangzhou. Relying on their aid and making the most of the rebels' disunity and lack of initiative, the Qing forces went on the offensive in early 1855, hitting the rebels painfully and even retaking some towns. To strike fear into the rebels, they brutalised the peaceful civilian population, killing nearly 100,000 innocent people.

In the meantime, military setbacks and food and other shortages precipitated differences among rebel units besieging Guangzhou. In May, the largest detachments, headed by Chen Kai and Li Wenmou, lifted the siege and withdrew to Guangxi province, where another Guangdong group of rebels was active since the autumn of 1854. Many detachments from the Guangzhou area and other localities in Guangdong followed suit, heading for Hunan. After their departure, the Qing had little trouble in destroying the remaining dispersed rebel forces.

In June, part of the Guangdong rebels lodged in Guangxi struck camp and set out for the south-west of Hunan province. As a result, two large rebel groups, the western and eastern, numbering several

tens of thousands of men in all, gathered in southern Hunan. Some detachments of the eastern group did not linger in the province and made a bid to join the Taipings. In September, fighting along the way, they came to Jiangxi province and made contact with the Taiping troops under Shi Dakai. A few detachments, though also seeking to join the Taipings, leagued up with local rebels and stayed on in the Chenzhou area. Here, at the end of 1855, they were crushed by the army of Zeng Guofan. The same fate had befallen units of the western group of Guangdong rebels at the end of September. Only a small number of them escaped and finally reached the Taipings.

Minor risings of commoners, resulting in the capture of county and prefectural towns, succeeded one another in various parts of Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangxi, Jiangsu and Guangdong in 1853 and 1854. The many armed risings of 1855 were compounded with large-scale insurrections of the Miao people in Guizhou and of Moslems in Yunnan outraged by the brutal Manchu oppression of national minorities, and seeking to fling off the burdens imposed by Chinese feudal landlords. The Miao rising erupted in the Huangping commandery and was headed by a peasant labourer, Zhang Xiumei; the rebels killed local Qing officials, and dispensed summary justice to Chinese landlords who had taken their land.

The rising in Yunnan broke out in the summer of 1855 and soon spread to nearly the entire province. Having wiped out the local Qing administration, the rebels, headed by Du Wenxiu, set up their own state, *Pingnan guo* (State of the Pacified South), with its capital in Dali.

The mighty wave of anti-Manchu risings of 1853-1856 in the central, eastern, and southern provinces spurred by the Taiping peasant war made the position of the Qing still more precarious. At times it seemed that Manchu power was on the point of collapse.

But the efforts of the Taipings and those of the anti-Manchu risings, impelled chiefly by the downtrodden peasantry, failed to merge into one large wave that could have swept out the Qing dynasty. The secret societies with typically localist sentiments, were divided, and, as a rule, reluctant to join up with the Taipings. The Taipings, too, did little or nothing to establish ties with the secret societies, and rendered no aid to the popular risings. If they had done so, their own position would have benefited. All this was expressive of the class limitations of the feudal peasantry, which prevented it from understanding the need for unity of all anti-feudal and anti-Manchu forces under a single leadership on the scale of the country. Defeat of most of the popular risings of 1853-1856 enabled the feudal reactionaries to buttress their positions and reduced the Taiping's chances of gaining final victory.

Dissent Among Taiping Leaders in the Autumn of 1856

The quarrelling among its leaders had a disastrous effect on the Taiping movement. Formally, Hong Xiuquan, absolute ruler and Heavenly Prince, held supreme power. But he had withdrawn from administrative and military affairs earlier on, when still in Guangxi, and on coming to Nanjing ensconced himself in a sumptuous palace with his many wives and concubines. Nearly all governmental powers he passed on to the Eastern Prince, Yang Xiuqing. Yang was put over the other princes, who were even denied the right of having direct contact with Hong Xiuquan.

On receiving these limitless powers, Yang took tight hold of the reins of government, became despotic in his ways, and reduced the other princes to a state of subservience. He sent them where he wished, and was arrogant with them and their relatives. This turned the princes and their families against him. They only waited for a suitable occasion to settle scores.

Power-hungry Yang began seeking rights and honours equal to Hong's. In July 1856, taking advantage of the monopoly accorded him of 'embodying the Heavenly Spirit' and pronouncing 'the will of God', Yang, who had shortly before engineered a victory over Qing forces besieging Nanjing, invited Hong Xiuquan to his residence and 'in the name of God' required the Heavenly Prince to accord him the *wansui* (live ten thousand years) toast—a ritual reserved exclusively for Hong himself. This was clearly a claim to nominal power which Hong, despite his religious fanaticism, had no intention of sharing with anyone. But not being strong enough to resist Yang, the Heavenly Prince yielded. The event served as a pretext for an open quarrel among the Taiping leaders.

Hong sent a secret order to Wei Changhui, who was in Jiangxi, to hurry back to the capital and punish the impudent Yang. Wei's force of 3,000 men entered Nanjing at night on 1 September. The soldiers, who had been drilled beforehand, encircled Yang's palace noiselessly, broke into it, and opened fire. The palace guard, caught unawares, rendered practically no resistance. By dawn, Yang, his children, wives and relatives, the palace guard, the serving maids, and court officials were all dead. In the days that followed Wei's henchmen roamed through the city in search of still surviving followers of Yang Xiuqing, and killed them and their wives and children without pity.

Assistant Prince Shi Dakai came to Nanjing a month later to reconnoitre the situation and the further intentions of Wei Changhui and Hong Xiuquan. But he stayed in the capital only a few hours. Warned of Wei's intention to kill him, Shi made his escape at night to join his army. Thereupon, on Wei's orders, Shi's family, which had remained

in the Taiping capital, was exterminated.

On reaching Anqing, Shi hastily summoned loyal troops encamped at Hongshan in the vicinity of Wuhan, and on 8 November, when they arrived, demanded of the head of the Taiping state that Wei and the other chief culprits of the mass killings should be executed. He warned that if his demand was not met he would march on Nanjing with his 40,000-strong army.

By that time the situation in Nanjing became strained to the extreme. During his short stay in power Wei had killed something like 30,000 people. His reign of terror had earned him the hatred of the townsmen and the Nanjing garrison, and also that of many of his own followers. Word of Shi Dakai's march on Nanjing and of his demand to execute Wei reached the capital and served to unite all those who opposed the blood-stained dictatorship of Hong's favourite. The Heavenly Prince seized on this opportunity to put Wei out of the picture. After two days of turmoil, Wei's small force was crushed, and he was captured and slain. Other culprits of the mass killings were also executed on Hong's orders.

On 28 November, Shi arrived in the Taiping capital. Since he was immensely popular among the rank and file, Hong gave him the reins of power. But the quarrelling among the Taiping chiefs did not stop.

The rebels paid a high price for this dissension. Thousands of battle-hardened Taipings, the backbone of the central military and administrative apparatus, had been put to death, including three out of the five Taiping princes and many other esteemed and experienced leaders.

The Qing troops did not miss the opportunity offered by the disarray and demoralisation reigning in the Taiping camp. In November and December 1856, they assumed the offensive on nearly all fronts and quickly captured—this time for good—the strategically important city of Wuhan (on 19 December 1856) and a number of other towns and areas in Hubei, Anhui, and Jiangxi provinces. All down the line, the Taiping army was compelled to go on the defensive. The peasant war entered a period of crisis and military defeats, which coincided in time with changes called forth in the country by the Second Opium War of 1856-1860.

Chapter 5

THE SECOND OPIUM WAR 1856-1860

In October 1856, at the height of the turmoil in the camp of the Taipings, Britain started a new predatory war against China. This war, known as the Second Opium War, continued for four years and was engineered by the British colonialists to enlarge the unilateral rights and privileges they had wrested from the Qing government in the First Opium War of 1840-1842. At the back of it lay the imperatives of the then growing European capitalism, which needed more markets and more sources of raw materials for the rapidly growing factory industries.

Preparation and Outbreak of the Second Opium War

The sharp deterioration of the political situation inside China owing to the Taiping Rebellion whetted the expansionist appetites of the capitalist class in Britain, France, and the United States. For the ruling element in these countries the civil war which had weakened Chinese resistance to outside pressures offered enticing opportunities. But the Crimean war that broke out in 1853 prevented Britain and France from massing large enough military forces in China, while the United States was reluctant to take risks on its own. All the same, the Western powers endeavoured to bend the Qing government to their will by intimidation, blackmail, and promises. At the beginning of 1854, the governments of Britain, France, and the United States came to terms concerning joint diplomatic pressure on the Dragon Throne. In the autumn, they presented the Qing with a list of demands transcending the terms of earlier treaties. The Qing turned it down.

When the Crimean war ended in January 1856, the British colonialists saw their chance. They went over to a policy of direct military

force. A few months after the hostilities in the Crimea had ceased, they began massing a large navy with landing troops in China waters. Instead of the several warships in the Hong Kong area, there now were 16, and by October their number grew to 23. So large a fleet of warships had not been seen on the China coast since the First Opium War. In the autumn of 1856, the British colonialists were ready. Now they waited for a suitable pretext to attack.

Before long a pretext did turn up. On 8 October 1856, the authorities of Guangzhou arrested the crew of the *Arrow*, a lorcha (vessel with Chinese rig and foreign hull) that was a floating den of pirates who boarded and pillaged merchant vessels on the high seas. On the pretext that the ship had once been licenced by Hong Kong authorities to fly British colours, the English Consul in Guangzhou, Harry Parkes, charged the Qing with 'insulting the British flag'. On 23 October, a British naval squadron began capturing Chinese forts on the Zhujiang covering the approaches to Guangzhou, and landed troops on the grounds of foreign factories in the city outskirts. On 27 October, the British force started shelling Guangzhou, and in three days demolished hundreds of houses in the suburbs and within city walls, leaving thousands of civilians homeless.

That was the overture to the Second Opium War, provoked by the British colonialists.

The Fighting Before the Conclusion of the Tianjin Treaties

In this predatory venture the British colonialists, and later also the French, sought to make use of the civil war in China to saddle the Manchu government with new, still more onerous treaties. Not interested in letting the Taipings win, for that could defeat all their plans, they did not intend to hinder the ruling Manchu-Chinese clique from putting down the Taiping Rebellion. This was what essentially shaped their strategy. They mounted offensive operations not along the entire coast, but only at points far removed from areas where the Qing were fighting the Taipings—at first in the vicinity of Guangzhou, then along the line from Dagu to Beijing. In the other treaty ports they got along splendidly with the Qing, and in Shanghai even made common cause with them in repulsing Taiping pressure. The Anglo-French aggressors, in fact, did not officially declare war. They pretended that they were not fighting China or the Chinese people, but were carrying out a punitive expedition against the viceroy of Liangguang (Guangdong and Guangxi provinces), Ye Mingchen, for violating treaty provisions, and would later despatch a military and diplomatic mission to Zhili to conclude

fresh treaties with the Qing government. This enabled them to employ minimal strength—using the open ports, notably Shanghai, as auxiliary bases for their warships and landing force—to achieve the maximum results.

The Qing authorities, too, refrained from declaring war on Britain and France, and co-operated peacefully with Anglo-French vested interests in all the treaty ports (except Guangzhou), because they did not want to have to draw off strength from battlefields against the Taipings. The localities attacked by the foreign aggressors were, in effect, abandoned to their fate.

When the British were provoking the new military conflict with China, they were convinced that one or two victories at Guangzhou would bring the frightened Qing government to its knees. Preoccupied with putting down the Taiping Rebellion, it was expected to immediately comply with all their demands. But with the outbreak of strife within the Taiping leadership, the Dragon Throne regained confidence and refused to concede ground to the British, fearing that this would completely discredit it in the country and undermine the ages-old pillars of rule. The British had no more than a score of warships and some 1,000 ground troops on the China coast. But the forces opposing them, though much more numerous, were poorly armed and poorly trained, and consisted chiefly of provincial troops (*xianyong*) and landlord self-defence militia detachments. The people's patriotic organisations that had earlier helped to resist British penetration, had been dissolved when Ye Mingchen suppressed popular risings in Guangdong in 1845 and 1855.

Still, the aggressors with their insignificant ground force did not hope to capture Guangzhou, which had a 20,000-strong garrison of Manchu-Chinese troops. Starting late in October and until mid-November, they bombarded the city from their ships and the captured forts, setting fire to its outskirts. On 6 November, they sank a fleet of 23 Chinese warjunks at Guangzhou, and a landing party captured fort Donggu, following up on 12 and 13 November with the seizure of the strongly fortified island forts of Huangdang and Yangyangxie with 400 cannon in the Zhujiang estuary. The fort garrisons rendered little or no resistance. But the British did not feel strong enough to hold all the captured positions, and withdrew from some of the forts after demolishing them. The Chinese troops, which finally saw that the enemy had come in small numbers, regained confidence. Furthermore, incited by the pillage and violence of the British soldiers, the local population started a guerrilla war. During the night of 14 December, Chinese troops assisted by the populace destroyed a foreign factory in Guangzhou. The British unit there barely escaped total extermination. Soon, the British had to withdraw completely from the Guangzhou area, and en-

trenched themselves in the forts of the Zhujiang estuary, cutting the sea route to the city.

Tension also mounted on Hong Kong island (the chief British base). Many Chinese residents there refused to work for foreigners and crossed to the mainland. Disturbances were about to break out, and fearing an uprising, Hong Kong's governor-general, John Bowring, and the commander of the British squadron, Admiral Seymour, asked for reinforcements. In March 1857, the British government assigned considerable armed forces to Lord Elgin, Britain's plenipotentiary negotiator in China. This gave the Second Opium War the complexion of a military-diplomatic expedition. Not to weaken the Qing 'more than absolutely necessary', the aggressors alternated use of guns with diplomatic moves. At the same time, they sought to win the support of other powers the sooner to bend the Qing government to surrender. In compliance with their accords with Britain of December 1856 concerning joint action in China, the French reinforced their fleet in China waters in early February 1857. Following the British example, the French government assigned a military force to Baron Gros, its negotiator extraordinary and plenipotentiary in China. Thus France, too, officially became a belligerent in the Second Opium War on Britain's side.

In March 1857, the British government began sounding out Washington and St Petersburg, hoping to involve the United States and tsarist Russia in its China adventure or, at least, to have them back the demands to revise the earlier unequal treaties. Russia refused to be drawn into the war. The United States, while declining to send troops to China, declared its support for Britain's demands which, the U.S. government held, conformed with the interests of all powers. Thereupon, Washington appointed Wm. B. Reed its representative in China. He was granted the widest possible powers: to secure the conclusion of a new treaty with the Qing government, to render the British diplomatic support, and, at the same time, to collaborate closely with representatives of other powers to prevent Britain from gaining too strong a grip on China. The tsarist government, which was not interested in seeing British influence grow, despatched its own representative, E. V. Putiatin, to China, instructing him to seek a treaty with the Qing that would provide Russia with the rights and privileges already enjoyed, or about to be obtained additionally, by Britain, France, and the United States.

Elgin sailed from Britain for Hong Kong in the latter half of April 1857, followed a month later by the French representative, Baron Gros. Simultaneously, additional military contingents embarked for Hong Kong from Britain and France. But the mighty anti-British uprising of sepoys erupted in India at that time, and the British troops placed at the disposal of Lord Elgin were re-routed to India.

There was a lull in hostilities in the Zhujiang estuary. Given the vast superiority of the Anglo-French forces in arms, warcraft, and organisation, the Dragon Throne could not hope to win the war unless it was a war of all the people, a patriotic war. But patriotic feeling among the mass of the people was exactly what the Qing government and its viceroy in the South, Ye Mingchen, feared most of all. For then the people would arm themselves. So, Ye did nothing to rouse the people against the Western aggression. More, he went out of his way to dissolve the volunteer units that did happen to spring up. After they set fire to a foreign factory he expelled them from Guangzhou, and they gradually disintegrated. Neither did he rebuild the Guangdong naval flotilla after it was routed by the British. The same befell the provincial volunteer army, which through Ye's efforts was reduced from 10,000 effectives to a mere 2,000 by the autumn of 1857. Ye issued assurances left and right that British strength was waning and that Britain had not enough land forces to capture Guangzhou. This had a demoralising effect on the populace and, naturally, ground the axe of the British.

After the British had suppressed the most dangerous seats of the popular insurrection in India, they were able to go back to their aggressive plans in China. Troops from Britain, India, and France began arriving in Hong Kong, and by mid-December Elgin and Gros had 13 French and 26 British warships, and about 4,500 British and over 1,300 French landing troops. The two plenipotentiaries decided to use this force to capture Guangzhou, and make the Qing more pliable. With an operational plan already drawn up, they sent Ye Mingchen an ultimatum dated 12 December 1857. He was given ten days to allow foreigners unmolested access to Guangzhou, and required to pay an indemnity to compensate British losses incurred during the hostilities; besides, he was to give his consent to opening negotiations of new treaties.

Ye underestimated British and French strength. Furthermore, he was misled by rumours that Queen Victoria had issued strict orders to refrain from military action. He therefore categorically rejected the Elgin-Gros ultimatum. More, he made no preparations for repulsing a possible attack on Guangzhou. The city was completely undefended. On 30 December, an Anglo-French force of nearly 5,000 men captured the fortress walls and the inner forts of Guangzhou meeting no serious resistance.

Though the Manchu eightbanner troops had surrendered at once, the invaders did not for a number of days venture into the streets of the large city that could in different circumstances easily have been a death trap for their relatively small force. On 5 January, they arrested Ye Mingchen. He was shipped to Calcutta, where he soon died. By the people of China he is remembered as a blood-

stained tyrant and a bungling diplomat and general who 'didn't fight, didn't make peace, and didn't defend them'.

Along with Ye, the invaders arrested the commander of the local garrison, the Manchu general Mukedene, and governor Bo Gui. A few days later, Mukedene was reinstated as commander of the now disarmed garrison, while Bo Gui was appointed provisional viceroy and imperial commissioner for relations with foreigners. In February 1858, the Qing government confirmed the appointments.

In effect, all military and civil power in Guangzhou was concentrated in an 'administrative commission' set up by the occupation forces. It consisted of two British and one French representative, who supervised and controlled everything Bo Gui did. Special police units were formed, consisting of Britons, Frenchmen, and Chinese collaborationists. Helped by Bo Gui and other puppets from among the *shenshi* gentry and the compradores, these units collected all arms from the populace, emptied the provincial treasury in a matter of weeks, and carried out wholesale searches and arrests, thus averting the popular rising that was being organised by patriots. People were executed in large numbers in the outskirts of Guangzhou, and the executions were accompanied by arson, pillage, and violence in the near-by villages.

Soon, the populace began rendering armed resistance. Detachments of the *shenshi*-led rural militia that had survived in the Foshan area and north of Guangzhou, were the moving spirit behind the resistance. A joint command was set up in the counties of Panyu and Nanhai. Gathering several tens of thousands of volunteers, the commanders called on the people to kill any invaders daring to enter districts under their control. Guerrilla actions against Anglo-French troops in the Guangzhou area continued until the day in July 1858 when the Qing government took harsh steps to dissolve the patriotic force. The struggle had been far removed from an all-out people's war, which was averted in every possible way by the Qing authorities and the leadership of the rural militia.

The Dragon Throne failed to draw any lessons from the defeat its troops had suffered at Guangzhou. Captive to its tendentious notions of world affairs, it treated the British and French 'barbarians' with the utmost contempt, and thought they would never dare to extend the hostilities to other parts of the country.

When in February 1858, the envoys of France and Britain, backed by those of the United States and tsarist Russia, sent an ultimatum to the imperial authorities demanding that negotiations of new treaties should begin in Shanghai not later than the end of March, the Qing government replied that Elgin and Gros should wait in Guangzhou for a decision on their 'requests'. The Western representatives naturally took this as a sign of reluctance to meet their demands.

In April, accompanied by an armed force, Elgin and Gros left Shanghai and sailed north to Dagu.

The Qing government instructed its negotiators to reject the Western demand of opening the interior of China to foreign trade and missionary activity, as this would prejudice the country's sovereignty. But it also turned down the demand of exchanging ambassadors and establishing foreign embassies in Beijing, which would have done no harm to China and was wholly in keeping with longstanding international practice. More, its objections were stronger precisely to this demand. The ruling Manchu elite was less concerned about the interests of the Chinese people, but feared that the probable refusal of the ambassadors to prostrate themselves before the emperor or perform other humiliating rites would dispel the belief of the people in the omnipotence and 'divine origin' of the Qing dynasty and destroy its 'feeling of awe', thus causing the pillars of Manchu rule to crumble.

On 20 May 1858, an Anglo-French landing party captured the Dagu forts after a two-hour battle under cover of naval guns. Thereupon, the Western negotiators escorted by the Anglo-French squadron moved unmolested up the Baihe and came to Tianjin on 30 May. The Qing delusion of Western weakness burst like a bubble. Their fear of an Anglo-French advance on Beijing (in fact unlikely owing to the absence of a large enough ground force) saw the Manchus quickly give ground. To begin with, in Tianjin Qing commissioners signed treaties with the representatives of Russia (on 13 June 1858) and the United States (18 June 1858), both of whom were enlisted as mediators.

The Sino-Russian treaty reaffirmed Russia's right to send embassies to Beijing when necessary, and extended to it the rights and privileges other Western powers already had or might obtain, including the right of trading in the open ports.

Responding to a Qing request, Putiatin offered arms and military instructors to help the Chinese build a 'new military force' that would 'contain the inclination to violence on the part of other states'.

The Sino-American Tianjin treaty differed little from the treaties China had signed with Britain and France, facilitating the penetration into China of U.S. capital. Negotiator Reed also secured a special accord under which China would pay the U.S.A. an indemnity of 500,000 *liang* for losses Americans had incurred in the hostilities at Guangzhou.

In face of British and French pressure, the Qing commissioners surrendered all down the line.

The Anglo-Chinese treaty signed in Tianjin on 26 June 1858 granted the British the right to set up a permanent embassy in

Beijing, granted them free movement, allowed missionary activity in the interior of China, and exempted British goods from the *lijin* (transit tax) provided an additional duty of 2.5 per cent of their value was paid for them. The towns of Niuzhuang, Dengzhou, Tainan, Danshui, Chaozhou, and Qunzhou were opened to foreign trade and foreign warships. The Qing undertook also to allow foreign merchants and warships to enter the Yangzi once the Taiping Rebellion was quelled, and to open three Yangzi ports (to be chosen by the British), with one of them, Zhenjiang, to be opened not later than a year following the conclusion of the Tianjin Treaty. British consular officials were given the right of communicating freely with local Qing authorities, including viceroys and provincial governors. The right of consular jurisdiction was reaffirmed, and mixed Anglo-Chinese courts of law were to be established to deal with lawsuits involving British subjects and Chinese. On top of this, the Qing were to pay Britain an indemnity of 4,000,000 *liang* of silver.

The Franco-Chinese treaty, signed in Tianjin on 27 June 1858, differed from the Anglo-Chinese only in that France was satisfied to receive but half the indemnity promised to the British, and in that it agreed to have its embassy visit Beijing only when needed, but this with the reservation that if any other power established a permanent embassy in the imperial capital, France would follow suit.

The civilised British and French colonialists did not have the heart to 'grace' their Tianjin treaties with a provision legalising the opium trade. They had it legalised without pomp and fanfare. A tariff agreement signed by Elgin, Gros, and the Qing commissioners in Shanghai in November 1858, included opium in the list of items admitted to China. Under the agreement, a 5 per cent customs duty was fixed on nearly all goods shipped in and out of the country.

The Tianjin treaties signed by Britain, France, and the United States contributed to the Western enslavement of the Chinese people. By formalising China's rightless and unequal position in international law, they turned the Qing Empire into a semi-colony of international capitalism.

Renewal of the War and Conclusion of the Beijing Agreements

Under the provisions of the Sino-British and Sino-French Tianjin treaties, the exchange of ratification papers was to occur in Beijing not later than a year after their signing. But recovering from the shock produced by his diplomatic reversal, Emperor Xianfeng decided 'to take no action that might create suspicion; to fortify the sea approaches to Tianjin, and to wait until the barbarians set out for

the imperial capital next year to exchange the treaty papers in order to destroy them'.¹ To suit this plan, the forts in the Baihe estuary, notably Dagū, were urgently and thoroughly reinforced.

But evidently the emperor did not have too much faith in his ability to defeat the British and French in the event of a renewal of hostilities, for he ordered his dignitaries Gui Liang and Huashana to obtain by diplomatic means Britain's and France's renunciation of the more unacceptable provisions of the Tianjin treaties: accreditation of foreign ambassadors in Beijing, opening of the Yangzi to foreign trade, freedom of foreign travel in the interior of China, and payment of war reparations. In return, they were to promise that foreign goods would be allowed into the country duty-free.

In February 1859, however, the Qing confined themselves to the sole demand that the ambassadors of Britain, France and the United States go to Beijing for the exchange of ratification papers not via Dagū but via Beitang (north of Dagū) without an armed escort, and that after the exchange they immediately go back. The demand, which was not contrary to the Tianjin treaties, was accompanied with attempts to obtain British and French consent to the demeaning *kowtow* ritual, the request that the ambassadors should not travel in litters with an escort, that the ratification be postponed two months, and that the exchange take place not in Beijing but in Shanghai, and the like. In short, Emperor Xianfeng was now concerned solely with preserving his standing in the eyes of his subjects.

These manoeuvres of the Qing government, coupled with reports appearing in the government newspaper in Beijing that forts in the Baihe estuary had been reinforced, put the British on their guard. They decided to resort to force again.

On 20 June 1859, British envoy Sir Frederick Bruce, along with the envoys of France and the U.S.A., appeared at Dagū with 18 warships, and ordered the authorities to lift the barrier across the Baihe to let their fleet pass to Tianjin. The viceroy of Zhili informed them that passage along the Baihe was forbidden to foreign warships, and suggested that the envoys go to Beijing via Beitang without a military escort.

Bruce and Bourboulon were adamant. On 25 June, the British fleet, joined by two French and one American warship, tried to take the Dagū forts and open the way to Tianjin. But this time the scheme misfired. The considerably reinforced garrison of the forts put up a devastating artillery barrage. The British lost six ships, casualties running to some 90 dead and 345 wounded. Among the wounded was the commander of the British squadron. There was no choice but to limp back to Shanghai.

When word of the defeat reached Britain, the bourgeois press raised an outcry, calling for 'revenge'. Though welcoming the cam-

paign, the British cabinet was not for a number of reasons prepared to take a final decision, and kept the further comportment of the Qing government under close observation.

Emperor Xianfeng and his warlike but short-sighted advisers—the Manchu Su Shun, who was the emperor's favourite and the factual head of the government, the Mongol Prince Sengerinchin, and others—believed that after the Dagū defeat the British and French would be afraid to resume hostilities. Convinced of this, the emperor issued the following edict: 'All provisions of the peace treaties of 1858 are considered null and void.... Agreements are to be concluded in Shanghai, for it is intolerable for envoys to travel to the North. If, however, any foreign warships come again to the estuary of the Baihe, they must be severely punished, so that later we should not repent.'² Still, he left Beitang open for passage of the envoys to Beijing. The British and French responded to these conflicting acts by redoubling their preparations for another military campaign against Beijing to compel the court to meet their demands unconditionally.

In April 1860, an Anglo-French force occupied the Zhoushan islands. Thereupon, the British captured Dalien Bay in Liaodong, while the French took the port of Yantai (Chefoo) in Shandong, setting up bases for a subsequent offensive on Tianjin and Beijing. In the summer of 1860, more than 18,000 British troops and more than 6,000 French troops were concentrated there, backed by some 200 warships and transports. Elgin and Gros reappeared on the scene, vested with their former powers as commanders of expeditionary forces.

In face of the impending renewal of hostilities, the rift between the two factions in the Manchu ruling camp became deeper still. The more conservative and influential faction headed by Emperor Xianfeng continued to advocate war in the name of China's political and economic self-isolation and its outdated traditions and prejudices. But it was unable to strengthen the country's defences effectively, and continued the destructive 'no war no peace' policy.

The other, no less reactionary faction, consisting among others of Gui Liang, Huashana, He Guiqing, Wang Youling (governor of Zhejiang), Zeng Guofan (viceroy of Hubei and Hunan), Li Hongzhang (viceroy of Jiangsu and Jiangxi), who saw that the foreign aggressors did not intend to unseat the Qing regime, insisted on ending the war, complying with all Anglo-French demands, and gaining Western assistance in putting down the Taiping Rebellion. In a memorial on 13 June 1860, He Guiqing and Wang Youling pleaded with the emperor to ratify the Tianjin treaties and not to reject the demands made by Bruce and Bourboulon in March. But at that moment policy at the Qing court was being made by the war party.

In early August 1860, Anglo-French troops landed unresisted at Beitang and began their advance on Dagou and Tianjin. The emperor panicked. One moment he would resolutely order resistance, the next insist on a quick truce. At the beginning of September, after the Anglo-French had with ease routed the poorly trained Mongol-Manchu horsemen of Sengerinchin armed with nothing but bows and arrows, swords, and spears, and had captured Tianjin and Dagou, Emperor Xianfeng wanted the 'barbarians' destroyed like 'noxious beasts', but also instructed his commissioners to accept all Western demands save the articles on indemnities and the accreditation of ministers in the imperial capital. But the intruders were not content with anything short of complete and unconditional surrender, and marched on Beijing, loosening pillage and violence on the peaceful civilian population along the way. In a special edict the emperor promised he would put himself at the head of his troops 'and so discharge the retribution of Heaven and punish the barbarians'. In reality, however, he was hastily preparing to flee to Rehe province, and instructed Prince Yi (Zai Yuan) to comply with all the demands of Elgin and Gros. On 14 September, the Manchu negotiator met Western spokesmen and surrendered on all points, provided the enemy offensive was halted immediately. This was a clear indication for the invaders that the Qing were impotent to ward off their entry into Beijing. Despite the understandings they had reached with the Manchus, they continued their advance, while setting additional conditions.

On 18 September, the Anglo-French army inflicted a devastating defeat on the Qing troops at Zhangjiawan, and on the 21st wiped out their remnants blocking the road to Beijing at Baliquiao. The imperial capital was gripped by panic. Court dignitaries and city officials took flight. The first to flee, with his entire court, was the terrified emperor, instructing his stepbrother, Grand Duke Gong, to sign a peace on any terms.

On 5 October, the Anglo-French resumed their march on Beijing. The only resistance they met came from small and dispersed groups of the local populace. On the 7th, reaching the outskirts of the imperial capital, the invaders ransacked the palaces of Yuanmingyuan, the summer residence of the Qing emperors, a resplendent monument of 18th-century Chinese architecture abounding in treasures, rare works of art, and unique books. On the orders of Elgin and Gros, the palaces were demolished, the parks laid waste, and all other buildings burned down. The same was done to the homes of many peaceful residents in Beijing's suburbs. The commanders of the Manchu garrison of the imperial capital, twice or thrice more numerous than the invading force, complied with the Western allies' demand and opened the gates to the city on 13 October. By that

time Grand Duke Gong, who was hiding in the neighbouring village of Changxindian, had obtained guarantees of personal safety from the Russian envoy, N. P. Ignatiev (who was *en route* to the capital simultaneously with British and French diplomats), and made contacts with Elgin and Gros, agreeing to all their demands.

Having come to the walls of Beijing, the British were not loath to assume complete control over the Qing government. But this was resisted by their French partners and the Russian diplomats, who did not want Britain to have too much power in China to the detriment of their own interests.

On 24 October 1860, an Anglo-Chinese agreement was signed in Beijing, and the following day a Franco-Chinese. Papers ratifying the Tianjin treaties were exchanged. Under the Beijing agreements, the Qing consented to have permanent Western legations in Beijing, opened Tianjin to foreign trade, allowed British and French contractors to recruit and ship out Chinese coolies, ceded the peninsula of Jiulong, adjoining Hong Kong, to the British, agreed to pay Britain and France 8,000,000 *liang* each in indemnities, and returned property confiscated from Catholic missionaries in the 17th century. To the Chinese text of the Franco-Chinese agreement, its translator, the Catholic priest A. Delamare, surreptitiously added a clause of his own, permitting French missionaries to buy and rent land in all provinces, and build on it at will. This unsolicited provision, too, was resignedly accepted by the Qing.

In early November 1860, after the emperor had officially endorsed the terms of the Beijing agreements, the Anglo-French troops were withdrawn from the imperial capital.

As a result of China's defeat in the Second Opium War, Britain and France saddled the Qing with new, still more onerous, unequal treaties and agreements, offering foreign capitalists new opportunities to do their will in the country. The defeat of feudal China signalled the end of Qing conservatism and self-isolation. The hand of the advocates of rapprochement with the West, seeking joint suppression of the people's struggle of liberation, was considerably strengthened.

Bounding of the Russo-Chinese Frontier Along the Amur and Ussuri

In the mid-19th century, unlike Britain and France, Russia maintained good relations with China. On 25 July 1851, representatives of the Russian and Qing governments concluded a treaty at Kuldja (Yili) normalising Russo-Chinese trade along the Central Asian border. The treaty provided for duty-free trade both ways in defined areas, with Russian merchants being granted unimpeded access to

the towns of Kuldja and Chuguchak (Tacheng). The affairs of Russian subjects were supervised by the Russian consul, while those of Qing subjects in Russian territory bordering on Xinjiang were handled by a specially-appointed Qing official. The Kuldja treaty laid the ground for regular trade between Russia and the Qing Empire along the Central Asian border.

Towards the end of the 1850s, Russia raised the question of territories it had temporarily lost in the Far East under the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, and this on the following grounds: 1) the lands between the Uda river and the middle reaches of the Amur, forcibly ceded by Russia to the Manchus under the Nerchinsk Treaty remained officially undemarcated under that treaty 'pending some other favourable time', which fact had been subsequently reaffirmed in Article 7 of the Russo-Chinese Treaty of Kiachta in 1727; 2) while the territories lost by Russia in 1689 were being neither settled nor developed by Manchus and Chinese, there was increasingly intensive settlement and development of Eastern Siberia by Russians, thus making a final solution of the Far Eastern border question vitally necessary; 3) owing to the Crimean War started by Britain and France against Russia, the active penetration of Britain, the United States, and France into Far Eastern waters in the mid-19th century was a threat to the lower reaches of the Amur and to the maritime province of Primorie, which also made any further delay in settling the question of the Far Eastern border prejudicial for the Russian authorities.

On these grounds, Governor-General of Eastern Siberia N. N. Muraviev, duly empowered by the Russian government, opened negotiations with the Heilongjiang commander-in-chief, Yi Shan, representative of the Qing government, concerning the final bounding of the frontier. As a result of the negotiations, the Treaty of Aigun was signed on 16 (28) May 1858, which established that 'the left bank of the Amur, starting from the Argun river to the sea estuary of the Amur river shall henceforth be the possession of the Russian State, and the right bank downriver up to the Ussuri river, shall be the possession of the Qing State, while the places and lands from the Ussuri river and further to the sea shall, pending definition of the border along these places between the two states, be as now in the common possession of the Daiqing and Russian states'. By this act the greater part of the territories lost by Russia in 1689 was restored to it, while, pending definition of the border, the Ussuri territory (Primorie) was acknowledged to be temporarily in the common possession of Russia and China.

The Russo-Chinese Tianjin Treaty signed a fortnight later, on 1 (13) June 1858, acknowledged the need for a final bounding of the frontier between the two countries at a number of localities.

The undefined parts of the border between China and Russia, said one of its articles, would be studied on site without delay by persons entrusted to do so by both governments, which will then come to terms concerning the line of the border: 'Following the definition of the borders there shall be made a detailed description and maps of the adjoining spaces, and these shall serve both governments as an incontestable border document in future times.'

In furtherance of this accord, the Russian minister to China, N. P. Ignatiev, who mediated at the negotiations between Grand Duke Gong and the British and French envoys in Beijing in the autumn of 1860, concluded a new treaty with the Grand Duke in Beijing on 2 (14) November. Under this treaty the Qing government reaffirmed the terms of the 1858 Treaty of Aigun and recognised as being in Russian possession the territory east of the Ussuri river, where, we might add, there was neither any permanently settled Manchu or Chinese population nor any Qing administration.

Chapter 6

THE TAIPIING REBELLION DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND OPIUM WAR

The Second Opium War had a strong bearing on the outcome of the epic struggle of the Taipings. But the Taiping leaders understood neither its mainsprings nor its consequences for the Chinese people. For a long time they nursed mistaken notions of the goals and intentions of the British and French colonialists. They were blind to the disastrous effects of the victory of the foreign aggressors, and attached little importance to the Second Opium War. Indeed, deluded by their sense of religious community, they were inclined to regard the British and French as 'brothers in the true faith', and as allies. The hostile acts of the Westerners they interpreted as misunderstandings. They even tried to win Anglo-French support, and failed to draw the right practical conclusions that should have altered the course of the war. The war added to the troubles and concerns of the Qing regime. It prejudiced the Dragon Throne's ability to oppose the Taiping and other popular movements. But even this the rebels did not properly exploit due to the dissension within their leadership that erupted afresh in the autumn of 1856.

The Split in the Rebel Camp

The rise to power of Shi Dakai, the most popular of the Taiping leaders, had for a time stabilised the situation in the rebel camp and in the battle zones. Early in 1857, the rebels had halted the Qing troops and units of Zeng Guofan's Hunan army in the west at Jiujiang. The enemy attempt to advance along the Yangzi was foiled, and this for a long period. South of the river, hindering the enemy offensive, the Taipings hung on to large territory from Jiujiang in the west to Zhenjiang in the east, which formed a large salient thrusting into the central and eastern parts of Jiangxi. North of the Yangzi, where the Taipings had lost many of their bases by

the beginning of 1857, they cleared the middle strip of Anhui province of the enemy with the aid of the Nian guerrillas, recovering most of their former positions.

But the stabilisation in the battle zones and in the rebel camp was short-lived. Strife broke out again among the rebel leaders. The struggle for power did not end with the liquidation of Yang Xiuqing and Wei Changhui. It only took other, less dramatic, forms. And Hong Xiuquan himself was the one who renewed it. Fearing that Shi Dakai would, like Yang and Wei, concentrate all factual power in his own hands, Hong sought to keep him under continuous control and to impinge on his prerogatives. For this he elevated his elder brothers Hong Renfa and Hong Renda to the rank of princes, and put them into the government, vesting them with what was in fact the same authority as Shi Dakai's.

Shi feared that the same lot as that of Wei Changhui lay in store for him, and moved from Nanjing to Anqing with his followers at the end of May 1857. Reaching the safety of Anqing, he launched vigorous factional activity. His forced flight from Nanjing and the calls he issued to the rebels to join him caused division and strife within the Taiping army. The misrule of the incompetent Hong brothers created disaffection, and many Taipings gravitated towards Shi Dakai in the hope that the gifted and experienced general would breathe new life into their movement and secure its final success. Others preferred to stay with Hong Xiuquan.

Shi won over many old-time Taiping commanders. They came to him with their troops, finally forming an army nearly 100,000 strong. Shi placed himself at the head of this host and on 6 October 1857 set out from Anqing to Jiangxi, and a little later went off to Guangxi, breaking off ties with Hong Xiuquan.

Soon after Shi's departure, discontent over the government of the Hong brothers erupted among the rebels who had stayed behind. Seeing them the chief culprits of the split, and judging them incompetent of running military and administrative affairs, many called for their dismissal. Under pressure, Hong Xiuquan did indeed temporarily strip them of their princely rank in October 1857, and made a few changes in his government. Hong's new favourite, Meng Deen, a man lacking distinction, who had for four years been chief of women's camps, was appointed head of government. The young military commanders, Li Xiucheng and Chen Yucheng, whose military exploits had catapulted them from the ranks to the exalted position of generals, were made his deputies. But being almost continuously engaged in the battle zones, they were unable to participate in the routine affairs of state.

The split in the rebel camp was a logical culmination of the bloody strife in the autumn of 1856. The personal and group interests

of the Taiping leaders superseded the common interests of the rebels to the detriment of the struggle against the feudal reaction. The Taiping army was decimated by the departure of Shi with many experienced commanders and the best of the rebel troops. The Taiping leadership, too, was weakened by the turmoil. Though many experienced and deserving Taiping leaders were still at hand, they were either out of favour or stayed deliberately at a distance from the capital for Hong trusted none but his relatives and favourites.

The sharp deterioration of the armed forces of the Taiping state owing to the split and the loss of energetic and capable leaders brought demoralisation and confusion in its wake.

The Qing took advantage of this, and mounted an offensive. In October 1857, after a succession of hard-fought battles, the Hunan army captured Hukou, an important rebel base along the western front on the canal between the Yangzi and Lake Poyanghu. This jeopardised another important Taiping stronghold, the city of Jiujiang, which was blockaded by the enemy from all sides. At the end of the year the Taipings also lost the fortresses of Zhenjiang and Guazhou, which had covered the approaches to Nanjing from the east. Thereafter, in January 1858, Qing troops thrust forward to the environs of the Taiping capital, restored and fortified the southern camp, with the result that Nanjing was again semi-encircled. At the same time, government forces drove a wedge into the rebel positions west of Pukou, and blockaded that important base covering the Taiping capital from the north. Communications between Nanjing and the other Taiping-held regions were thus impaired.

In May 1858, units of the Hunan army that had long held Jiujiang under siege managed to break into the city. The entire 17,000-strong Taiping garrison was wiped out in ferocious street fighting. Now the Hunan army was able to mount an offensive in Jiangxi, and came into the possession of most of the cities there by October.

The Taipings sustained heavy losses in men, forfeited the system of strongholds in Jiangxi, and thus lost their grip on many densely populated and rich areas of the province they had held for three years. The Yangzi, for a long time the rebels' main route of communication, was now essentially controlled by enemy flotillas, which carried out raid after raid on Taiping-held riverside towns.

By the end of 1858, the Taiping territory south of the Yangzi had shrunk to half its size of the summer of 1856. Now, it amounted to a narrow strip of land along the Yangzi from Nanjing to Jingdezhen in the south-western part of Jiangsu, the southern part of Anhui and a north-eastern piece of Jiangxi.

North of the Yangzi, too, the fortunes of war had generally turned against the Taipings up until the autumn of 1858. The setbacks were due in no small measure to the fragmentation of Taiping forces,

absence of requisite communications, and lack of co-ordination.

After a conference of Taiping military commanders in August 1858 endorsed Li Xiucheng's plan of eliminating these faults, the situation changed slightly for the better. In September, the Taiping armies under Li Xiucheng and Chen Yucheng fell on the main Qing forces of the northern camp at Pukou, and scored an overwhelming victory. The enemy blockade of Nanjing was breached, and communications via Pukou between the Taiping capital and other rebel regions were restored.

The Qing tried to turn the tide. In October, crack units of the Hunan army mounted an offensive in the central part of Anhui. In November they were surrounded, thoroughly thrashed, then wiped out at Sanhe by the joint forces of Li Xiucheng, Chen Yucheng, and the Nianjun. Soon, the Taipings were back in the positions they had held in western Anhui before September 1858. In the flush of victory, they struck heavily at the enemy in the early half of December, this time at Jingdezhen and Ningguo south of the Yangzi.

All the same, brilliant though the victories at Pukou and Sanhe had been, winning for Li and Chen the reputation of intrepid troop commanders and strategists, they did not bring about any radical change in the civil war. There set in a highly unstable equilibrium of strength. The Taipings had not yet recovered from the effects of the split in their camp. Hong Xiuquan and his government were as passive as before, showing little energy and initiative in political and military affairs. The Taiping capital was still a frontline city, constantly in peril of being captured by the enemy. Decimated by the split and continuous casualties, the Taiping army went on the defensive within the small territory it controlled, and for a time abandoned any thought of offensive campaigns.

The Qing, too, following their crushing defeat at Pukou and Sanhe, lost hope of quickly suppressing the Taiping Rebellion. They lacked strength even for a tight blockade of the Taiping capital, much less a swift and final assault. Resources and strength were then being spent mainly on fortifying the Beijing-Tianjin area in anticipation of a fresh Anglo-French invasion. Besides, a certain amount of strength was drawn off to cope with the Shi Dakai forces and the popular risings in other parts of the country.

The Rise of Hong Rengan. A New Work for Aid in Administration, and the Reforms

The most noteworthy development in the Taiping camp after the Pukou and Sanhe victories was the rise of Hong Rengan, a younger

cousin of the head of the Taiping state. In contrast to Hong Xiuquan's brothers, he had had an education and possessed varied knowledge despite failing the provincial examinations for the *xiucai* degree five times. Hong Rengan was a close friend and one of the earliest followers of the 'Taipings' supreme leader, though he had not taken part in the Jintian uprising (at that time he was teacher in his native Huaxian county). In 1852, persecuted by the Qing authorities, he had escaped to Hong Kong where Western missionaries gave him shelter and asylum. One missionary, Reverend Theodore Hamberg, recorded the conversations he had had with the fugitive, and eventually produced a pamphlet on Hong Xiuquan's early activities and the opening period of the Taiping Rebellion. In April 1859, after many hardships, Hong Rengan finally managed to reach Nanjing. He was warmly received by Hong Xiuquan, who lost no time in according him the title of prince and appointing him chief minister in the hope that he would bring the Taiping movement out of its crisis. And Hong Rengan, not lacking in statesmanship, did all he could to live up to his cousin's expectations.

In the summer of 1859, he drew up a fairly long memorial to the head of the Taiping state, intended, as it said, 'to contribute to the perfection of administration and the revival of popular virtues'.¹ It won the approval of Hong Xiuquan, and was published in Nanjing under the title, *A New Work for Aid in Administration*. The memorial contained a programme that would, in its author's opinion, turn China into a powerful state. The content had varied ideological origins, was contradictory and inconsistent from the point of view of social progress, and worlds removed from the vital class interests of the oppressed feudal peasantry.

The economic section envisaged a set of reforms that might be described superficially bourgeois, and would not affect the system of landed estates and feudal exploitation. Among its provisions, one was to assist extensive development of mineral wealth by private entrepreneurs, establish trading companies and private banks, construct various modes of transport, including railways, introduce life and property insurance, encourage technical innovations, issue patents for inventions, set standards for the building of highways and local roads, put up a network of governmental and private postal stations, and so on.

On the plane of foreign relations, Hong Rengan recommended good-neighbour relations with the Western countries, borrowing their technical knowledge and useful economic institutions, and conducting trade with them on the basis of sound competition.

In the field of home policy he elaborated on the old Chinese notion of a strong government, especially at the centre, by outlawing all organisations of a political nature, which, he said, undermined

the pillars of the state. He urged measures to combat favouritism, sale of government offices, squeeze, and favoured the institution of village elders and guards to maintain peace and order in the countryside. He also spoke out for close bonds between rulers and ruled by setting up letter-boxes for the grievances of the people and centres for the collection of information, and for encouraging newspapers to extend publicity and to know the opinion of the public.

Some of Hong Rengan's proposals, and this in a variety of fields, reflected the democratic and humane character of the peasant war of the Taipings and the specific qualities of their religious outlook. Among other things, he envisaged the establishment of state-run schools, hospitals, orphanages, and asylums for old and for disabled people. He encouraged private charities, and intended banning infanticide by needy parents, the trade in slaves, the use of liquor, opium and tobacco, and soothsayers and fortune-tellers, and to root out evil customs and cultivate good ones.

Some of his suggestions, however, were a projection of the religious fanaticism and intolerance of the Taipings, and were contrary to the public good. He urged, among other things, that all Taoist and Buddhist temples and monasteries should be torn down, that all Taoist and Buddhist rites should be outlawed, as should all theatrical performances. The traditional Chinese philosophical schools were for him a 'handiwork of the devil' and were to be done away with, and he held that all books by the exponents of these schools should be burned.

Hong Rengan wrote in his *New Work* that the Taipings should devote themselves to studying the state of affairs in other countries, of which he provided some general, often ludicrous, information gleaned from Western missionaries.

All the same, the economic and foreign-political parts of Hong Rengan's programme showed that the more educated and forward-looking of the Taiping leaders were eager to keep abreast of the age, to benefit from the technical and economic achievements of other lands in order to make China rich and powerful, to end its self-isolation, and to maintain good-neighbourly relations with all states on a basis of equality and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

But the Taipings did not even try to carry out any points of Hong Rengan's programme. It was too far removed from the essential and urgent needs of the oppressed feudal peasantry. Besides, most of the Taiping leaders, and the mass of the rebels did not understand the need for the suggested innovations.

In office as chief minister, Hong Rengan carried out a number of reforms, but with very few exceptions they made no substantial impact on the outcome of the rebellion. In 1859, for example,

he reformed the Taiping calendar. He also reformed the system of state examinations. The time of the examinations, at the centre and locally, was made constant, and the names of the academic degrees were changed in the spirit of the Confucian 'rectification of names', so that they should 'more accurately accord with the content, and it should be seen from each name for what the person concerned has received his scholarly title'. To tighten discipline in the Taiping camp, Hong Rengan enacted a law proposed by Chen Yucheng on dismissing and arresting military commanders who disobeyed orders, on punishing high-handed officials, and on rewarding soldiers and officers who distinguished themselves in battle. This 'Heavenly Law' was introduced in the autumn of 1859.

Hong Rengan was also active as a writer. He condemned the prevailing superstition about 'lucky and unlucky' days, and campaigned against it. In 1861 he published a pamphlet, *Return to the True Road*, fashioned as a record of conversations with an official who had defected from the Qing. With great eloquence, Hong Rengan tried to show the superiority of Taiping ideas, customs and institutions, and called on all Chinese to take the 'true road' of supporting the Taiping movement. He was the author, too, of an appeal to the people, and the soldiers and officers of the Manchu armies and the Qing officials to assist the Taiping army and go over to the rebel side. He produced works on religious and other topics. Indeed, a distinct religious coating lay on all the writings of Hong Rengan: while denouncing superstitions and prejudices of one kind, he cultivated prejudices and superstitions of another kind, and preached religious fanaticism.

Though Hong Rengan could not infuse the Taipings with new strength, his stay in office and the removal to the background of Hong Xiuquan's other relatives and favourites, who were incompetent, had a certain beneficial effect.

The Social-Economic Policy of the Taipings in 1856-1860

The political and military crisis in the Taiping camp at the time of the Second Opium War was accompanied by a drastic deterioration of the economic situation.

The economic dislocation was due to a number of reasons. The cost of maintaining the huge army was one of them. Besides, in the zones of hostilities large tracts of land were ravaged, their populations seeking refuge elsewhere, with fields running to waste and the crafts and commerce driven to ruin. Among the other reasons was the absence of new territorial conquests, which would have meant capture of large stocks of food and property; the reduction of rebel

territory; loss of control over the Yangzi with the enemy sinking the Taipings' river fleet; the famine in some counties of Anhui, Jiangsu and Jiangxi in 1856 and 1857 owing to natural calamities, and so on.

In 1858 and 1859, the economic situation in the Taiping state declined still more. The besieged Taiping capital was in sad straits. Food stocks had begun to run low.

In 1856-1860, the Taipings' class policy, like the social and economic policy, was much the same as in the preceding period. As before, the rebels exterminated Manchus and those Chinese landlords and officials who took part in opposing the rebellion, and expropriated their property. The other Chinese landlords, the rich, and the officials who had taken no public stand against them, the rebels forced to pay a 'tribute of compliance', and thereafter a set of burdensome 'special taxes'. Those who evaded these impositions were severely punished. The traditional taxes and duties, too, were collected from the wealthy in larger amounts than before. In some cases, the Taiping authorities also made the wealthy pay various duties on behalf of the poor. Under the Taipings, in fact, the landlords and the rich bore a heavier fiscal burden than under the Qing. So, many of them preferred to flee the rebel areas and seek the protection of the Qing authorities.

Shifting the bulk of the tax burden on the propertied class, the rebels tried where they could to relieve the lot of the peasants. In a manifesto of 2 November 1860, Hong Xiuquan announced a reduction of taxes in the southern counties of Jiangsu just liberated by the Taiping army. The manifesto said:

"Now, seeing the suffering of the people, and fulfilling the will of the Most High, I and my youthful heir to the throne intend to govern humanely and to lower taxes in order to lighten the life of the people and to bring them relief.... As I have learned from the report of Brother Li Xiucheng, in the past the population of Jiangsu paid onerous taxes and extortionate duties to the Manchu devils, who sucked your blood and rebelled against Heaven.... Knowing of the difficulties experienced by the people and assuming that taxes must be exacted fairly, I command all chiefs in the localities forthwith to lower the tax by a definite proportion so as thus to lighten the life of the people."²

The land tax in the southern part of Jiangsu was substantially lowered in 1860-1861 (in some places by as much as two-thirds). In the rebel areas of Anhui, too, the land tax was lower than it had been before the Taiping army came.

In areas newly captured by the rebels, the land of killed or escaped landlords was, as before, given over to the tenants who tilled it. Many tenants were thereby relieved of giving away a large portion of the harvest as ground rent. Only in a few places in Changshu

county (Jiangsu province) did the Taiping authorities order tenants (at the end of 1860) to pay rent to landlords who had returned after taking flight, or to turn it over whole to the local authorities if the landlords had not yet returned. But here, too, the rent was substantially lower than under the Qing.

In the southern part of Jiangsu, following the arrival of the Taiping army tenants refused to pay rent, attacked landlords, and set fire to their houses. It was indeed chiefly under tenants' pressure that the ground rent was considerably reduced in all parts of Jiangsu occupied by the rebels in 1860 and 1861. This naturally eased the life of tenant farmers.

In 1860, in Jiangsu province, the Taiping authorities rendered badly needed help to refugees and the poor. In the Suzhou area, for example, they supplied clothing and food to many of those who had suffered from the hostilities, and distributed more than 100,000 bundles of copper coins to the poor.

The rebels showed concern for the arts and crafts, and for the growth of trade, and new markets sprang up with their assistance in a number of areas in Jiangsu.

In 1858 and 1859, owing to the mounting economic difficulties, the Taiping authorities were compelled to impose a modest tax on some artisan enterprises, notably on oilpressing. Similar taxes were levied on trading establishments. From 1860 on, following the Qing example, the rebels also put up customs posts to exact a transit tax. In many places they held large sales of property expropriated from landlords and the rich. The sales were popular, for the price of the goods was low. People willingly sold food products to the Taipings, and doubly so because the latter paid much higher prices for them than the Qing.

As we said before, the Taipings failed to do away with the prevailing feudal social and economic relationships, but they did try where they could to ease the life of the mass of the people.

The Shi Dakai Group in 1857-1860

The Shi Dakai group that had split away from the main body of Taiping forces in the autumn of 1857 remained loyal to the common ideological platform. As before, the rebels in Nanjing considered Shi Dakai one of the leaders of the Taiping state, and he, in turn, did not abolish the Taiping system of ranks and titles, Hong Xiuquan's variety of the Christian faith, or any of the laws, the calendar, the customs, and the slogans of the Taipings. True, a little later he introduced some innovations in the structure of the troops, and in the system of ranks and titles, but none of these

was significant. In sum, the Shi Dakai group was integrally part of the Taiping forces, though it refused to take orders from Hong Xiuquan.

In early October 1857, Shi Dakai's army of 100,000 abandoned the Anqing area and marched to Jiangxi. Up to the end of February 1858 it operated in the central and eastern parts of the province jointly with other Taiping forces stationed there, then mounted an attack on the south-western counties of Zhejiang, captured a few cities, and laid siege to Quzhou, defended by a garrison of 20,000 Qing troops.

The Manchu authorities hurriedly sent reinforcements. In mid-July, perturbed by the failure of the three-months-long siege of Quzhou and the increasing enemy resistance, Shi lifted the siege and led his army to sparsely populated mountainous regions in the western part of Fujian province.

This was probably when his plan ripened to fight his way to the remote, rich and densely peopled Sichuan province that had not yet been drawn into the civil war, and to set up a new anti-Manchu base. In October 1858, Shi's force set out from Fujian in two columns: one under Shi Zhenji headed across the south-western counties of Fujian and the northern part of Guangdong province into southern Hunan, while the other, under Shi Dakai himself, crossed southern Jiangxi in the same direction, so as to join the first column and advance on Sichuan.

But when the two columns joined forces and Shi Dakai's army, now grown to 200,000 men, tried to break through by the shortest route from southern Hunan to Sichuan in May 1859, it was halted in the vicinity of Baoqing (Hunan province) by a large force of Qing troops and self-defence landlord detachments. Hard-fought battles ensued, lasting nearly three months. The poorly armed and trained rebel army failed to breach the enemy lines and withdrew to Guangxi, where the Taiping movement had originated. For some time, it was active in the environs of the provincial capital of Guilin, but did not venture to storm it. Then, in September 1859, it broke up once more into two columns. The one under Shi Zhenji thrust into the southern counties of Guangxi, while Shi Dakai and his host captured the strategic city of Qingyuan in the western part of the province in mid-October. Shi Dakai turned the city into his headquarters, and stayed there for eight months until the beginning of June 1860. Tight discipline reigned among his troops. They did no injury to the working people, and imposed indemnities on none but landlords and the wealthy, whom they dispossessed of their food stocks and property.

Still, Shi Dakai behaved irresolutely and passively. He neither attempted to move on to Sichuan nor sought joint action with the

many local rebel groups controlling a considerable part of Guangxi province in order to crush the local Qing authorities in a concerted effort.

The division of Shi Dakai's army into two columns, with communications unreliable and no interaction between them, reduced its potential and led to disaster. Shi Zhenji's column, which was active in the south-western part of Guangxi, was defeated at Baise in April 1860, and was then utterly routed when crossing the mountains in a bid to join Shi Dakai at Qingyuan. A surviving detachment under Li Fuyou fought its way to Yunnan, then into Guizhou province, and operated there on its own, lacking contact with Shi Dakai's main force.

With the destruction of Shi Zhenji's column, the army of Shi Dakai lost nearly half its strength and forfeited any chance of success in Guangxi or in a drive to Sichuan. Besides, it was experiencing considerable food shortages, because fields in many parts of Guangxi lay abandoned owing to the long-drawn-out hostilities. To make matters worse, the Qing troops flushed with their victory over Shi Zhenji, redoubled pressure on Qingyuan, and in the summer of 1860 forced Shi Dakai to retreat to the south of the province.

Shi's passive tactics, the loss of nearly half his army, food shortages, and military setbacks combined to undermine the morale of his troops and placed in question any further fighting in isolation from the main body of Taiping forces. There was talk in the ranks and among Shi's commanders of going back to Anhui. Some top commanders thought it advisable to raise recruits and start back for Nanjing. But Shi was deaf to their counsel. Whereupon a few detachments, some 40,000 to 50,000 men in all, split away and formed several columns heading for Anhui province in July and August 1860. Some of them, who had followed much the same route as Shi Dakai's column, broke through the enemy ring after fierce fighting, reaching the western part of Jiangxi and then Zhejiang, and finally joining up with the Taiping army in 1861. Most of the other detachments were wiped out on the way to Anhui, while a few, awed by the hardships, defected to the Qing.

Thus, Shi Dakai lost most of his army and was in critical straits.

Popular Risings Headed by Secret Societies in 1856-1860

The hardships of the Second Opium War and the civil strife, the inability of the ruling Manchu dynasty to mitigate the social crisis, and its incompetent handling of the Anglo-French dilemma added to the class and national contradictions of the feudal society

and spurred the dispossessed, who were stimulated by the heroic struggle of the Taipings, to take up arms.

In 1856-1860, peasant risings, led as a rule by local secret societies, flared up in different parts of the far-flung Qing Empire. The guerrilla war of the Nianjun continued unabated in northern and central Anhui. So did the rebel movement in Guangxi. Risings of national minorities swept Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, and a peasant insurrection erupted under Li Yonghe and Lan Chaoding in the province of Sichuan.

The military co-operation of the Nian and the Taipings was a new development of the popular movement after 1856. In November 1856, the gifted Taiping general, Li Xiucheng, sent a letter to Zhang Luoxing, chief of the Nian, with an offer to join the Taiping army. From March 1857 on, the main Nianjun forces, headed by Zhang Luoxing, Gong Deshu and Su Tianfu, came away with a series of victories jointly with the Taipings in Anhui and Henan provinces south of the Huaihe. But a part of the Nianjun preferred to operate independently. They refused to co-operate with the Taipings, and lingered in their old bases in northern Anhui. In 1858, they were joined by a few more detachments that had split away from the main force. In the autumn, a large group of Nian troops, under Sun Kuixin, also parted company with the main force, setting up a base in the north-western part of Anhui. Some Nian units, seduced by Qing promises, went over to the enemy.

In the meantime, while the Nianjun under Zhang Luoxing (up to 100,000 men) acted jointly with the Taipings in central Anhui, two other groups raided the neighbouring provinces of Shandong, Henan, and Jiangsu—over-ran cities, captured government warehouses, killed Qing officials, and took food stores, cattle, and valuables from the wealthy.

In 1856-1860, the biggest rebel force in Guangxi province was that of the State of Great Accomplishments formed by Chen Kai, one of the leaders of the Guangdong rising of 1854-1855. It held from a quarter to a third of the province, including the city of Xunzhou. The State had an army, which swelled to 100,000 from time to time, a body of officials, and its own copper coin. In addition there were nearly a dozen less important rebel groups in the province, counting from several thousand to several tens of thousand men each, and, furthermore, numerous smaller independent detachments. In 1856-1857, these rebel forces were fairly successful. But though in Guangxi they were numerically much superior to the Qing troops they failed to crush the enemy and seize all the province because they did not act in unison. The Qing troops and landlord militia detachments scored victories over them time and again, and regained possession of some of the cities. This dampened the fervour

of the rebel movement.

The arrival of Shi Dakai's army in Guangxi in 1859 gave the rebels a distinct edge over the enemy. Lack of co-ordination, however, soon afforded the Qing troops and landlord militia an opportunity to rally and push back the rebels, and then, at the close of 1860, to mount an offensive at almost all points.

In Yunnan province armed rebel detachments took control of a large area and founded the Moslem State of the Pacified South with the capital in Dali. Though opposed to the rule of Manchu and Chinese feudalists and indignant over the oppression of other peoples of the empire, over national strife and enmity, the Yunnan rebels did not seek alliance with like-minded elements in other provinces. Their struggle was confined to their own province. The mass of the Chinese there, who did not profess Mohammedanism, were not drawn in. And local reactionaries made skilful use of national and religious differences to further their own ends. The Qing succeeded in retaining their hold on the provincial capital of Kunming and a few other cities in northern Yunnan. In 1857, the rebels encircled Kunming, and cut it off from its supply lines. But shortly, landlord self-defence units breached the blockade from outside and tried to clear the western part of the province, but were badly defeated. For a number of years, the Qing authorities in Yunnan were content to just retain Kunming and other cities in the northern part of the province.

A similar situation developed in the neighbouring province of Guizhou. Much of the territory, peopled mainly by Miaos, was securely in rebel hands in 1855. They wiped out the Qing administration and set up their own government, relying on their large military force. The chief base of the rebels was in the spacious mountainous parts of south-eastern Guizhou, with the centre at Taigong. Here more than 100,000 troops were massed under Zhang Xiumei, Bao Dadan, and other commanders. Miao detachments under Tao Xinchun and Jin Dawu were also active in the mountains in the west and north-west. Meanwhile, in the northern and central regions an uprising was under way of Chinese peasants led by secret societies.

Towards the end of 1858, what is known as the White Banner rebellion of Moslems broke out in the southern counties of Guizhou. And in the spring of 1860, a 25,000-strong unit of Shi Dakai's troops under Li Fuyou, which had come there from Guangxi, joined the fighting against the Qing.

The force of Chinese and Miao rebels approached the gates of Guiyang, the provincial capital, several times, but failed to take the city because they did not co-ordinate their assault. The Qing were hard put to it to hang on to the city and a few other towns and areas in the province, while the rest of the territory was securely in rebel hands.

In the autumn of 1859, a peasant movement swept across large areas of Sichuan province. The insurrection began in the township of Niupizhai, Yunnan province, near the southern border of Sichuan, where a minor secret society founded by the local peasants Li Yunhe and Lan Chaoding propagated the idea of 'striking down the rich and helping the poor'. In October 1859, Li and Lan called their followers to arms and thrust into Sichuan. Many local people joined them, and they soon captured three county towns in southern Sichuan, putting to death local officials. But after suffering a setback when they tried seizing the prefectural town of Suizhou (now Yibin), they withdrew to the salt springs area, where they spent the winter.

In the spring of 1860, the now still greater rebel army started an offensive on the central counties of Sichuan, and over-ran a large area with dozens of towns. The rebels executed corrupt and cruel officials there, took food and valuables from the rich, and called on the people to help them overthrow the despotic Manchu dynasty.

The rebellion threw the local reactionary gentry into great confusion. But the rebels missed the favourable opportunity to capture the provincial capital of Chengdu. In November 1860, they set up winter quarters in Fushun county. But though the fighting ceased for a time, the situation in Sichuan remained tense.

In 1856-1860 there were other, less conspicuous armed risings against the Qing in various parts of the country, compounded with peasant tax riots and tenants' mutinies against landlords.

Unlike the Taiping peasant war, however, the various rebellions, large and small, were of a purely local nature. Their aim was never more than to drive out the Qing from the county, prefecture, or province concerned. But all in all, they accounted for a piece of territory much greater than the Taiping state, and the number of participants, mounting into many hundreds of thousands, was also far superior to that of the Taiping army.

All these popular risings taxed the resources of the reactionary Qing regime, preventing it from massing its forces against the Taipings. And to this the Taipings, bedevilled by strife, division, and military setbacks, owe the fact that they were able to survive and gather fresh strength.

The Crushing Defeat of Qing Troops at Nanjing and the Taiping Drive into South Jiangsu in 1860

At the end of 1859 the military situation in Central China was, by and large, unfavourable for the Taipings. The food and arms shortages became increasingly felt as the weeks went by. A 100,000-

strong Qing army was slowly constricting the ring round Nanjing.

To relieve the city, Li Xiucheng and Hong Rengan decided to drive wedges into the strongest of the enemy armies—that of the southern camp—and break it up into two or three parts so as to destroy each one by one with superior strength.

Pursuing this plan, at the close of February 1860 Li mounted a diversionary attack from the Guangde area at the junction of Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces in the direction of Hangzhou, the provincial capital of Zhejiang. Force-marching across land in the rear of the southern troops and meeting no serious resistance, Li's force came to the approaches of the city within a fortnight, and broke into it on 19 March. The Chinese provincial troops guarding Hangzhou fled in panic, while the Manchu garrison took cover behind the walls of the inner citadel. Li did not bother to storm the fortress. Word had come that the southern commanders had sent troops to relieve Hangzhou, and that they were within reach. Li therefore considered his purpose done, and on 24 March abandoned the city and hurried back to Guangde by a shorter route. (The southern troops that arrived in Hangzhou lingered there until the end of April.)

In the meantime, on 8 April Li Xiucheng's army had according to a preconceived plan joined forces with other Taiping commanders who had moved to the Guangde area. In mid-April, they mounted a concerted offensive on the main southern group of the enemy from the flanks and rear. Co-ordinating their action with the Nanjing rebel garrison, they closed the circle round the southern camp and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Qing army in a savage and strenuous battle that lasted from the 2nd to the 6th of May. The Manchus left behind many dead and large amounts of equipment, withdrawing east to Zhenjiang and Danyang.

After a short rest, in mid-May, the main Taiping force under Li Xiucheng, Li Shixian and Yang Fuqing, started an offensive south-east of Nanjing. On 19 May, they wiped out the southern force that had retreated to Danyang. The enemy lost more than 10,000 dead. The few survivors fled in confusion to the Suzhou area, marauding and pillaging on the way.

Thereupon, having twice defeated the smaller army of the southern camp that had rushed back from Hangzhou, the Taipings captured the city of Changzhou on 26 May, took Wuxi on 30 May, and reached the approaches to Suzhou. The local people, angered by the plunder and violence of the Qing soldiers, gave the Taipings all the help they could. On 2 June the Qing force of 50,000 to 60,000 men surrendered Suzhou without a battle and went over to the rebel side. The victors obtained huge amounts of food which had been amassed for shipment to Beijing.

Following the seizure of Suzhou, one of the largest industrial and commercial centres of China at that time, the Taiping troops in southern Jiangsu met no other serious resistance and took town after town almost without a shot. By the beginning of July 1860 they controlled nearly the entire southern Jiangsu (with the exception of Shanghai), which was one of the richest and economically most developed regions in the country. In the summer of 1860, the rebels renamed it Su Fu province, and turned it into the main base of the Taiping movement.

In June the Taipings began priming for an attack on Shanghai. Eager to avoid any clash with the Western powers, they kept assuring them of friendly intentions. In messages to the British, French, and American officials in Shanghai, Li Xiucheng and Hong Rengan urged them not to obstruct the entry of Taiping armies into the city.

But their overtures fell on deaf ears. Though Britain and France were at war with the Qing government, their spokesmen had promised to help the Qing, and had officially declared on 26 May that British and French troops would defend Shanghai against a rebel incursion. The US diplomat had abstained, but in early June his countryman, the adventurer Frederick Ward, formed a mercenary unit of beachcombers of various nations in Shanghai to fight the Taipings.

On 18 August, Taiping troops under Li Xiucheng made an attempt to enter Shanghai. The rebels advanced to the city gates with orders to withhold fire, and not to injure foreigners. They gestured that they wished to negotiate. But the British and French opened up with muskets and guns, and compelled them to withdraw with losses to their original line. After this 'glorious victory', the Westerners began plundering the Chinese population in the city suburbs.

The following day the Taipings tried to approach the city walls once again. Again they came peacefully, and again they were fired upon and forced to withdraw. Thereupon, the interventionists set fire to the suburbs they had plundered the day before, first in order to clear the line of fire and second to eliminate the traces of their villainy. Following a third analogous, and equally abortive, attempt to enter Shanghai without a battle on 20 August, the rebels withdrew with heavy losses. The undisguised Anglo-French intervention in the civil war prevented the Taipings from taking Shanghai.

Though by that time the Taipings controlled nearly all the towns in southern Jiangsu, they were not complete masters of the captured territory. Some large and important rural areas were in the hands of the landlord militia ('white headbands'), which fought desperately to keep the rebels at bay.

In October 1860, the head of the Taiping administration in southern Jiangsu negotiated with the 'white headbands', offering

them profitable terms if they went over to his side. He managed to win the chief of a large militia brigade, who was at once given a high post in the Taiping state. In mid-November, the Taiping authorities and the most influential of the 'white headbands', Xu Shaoqu, concluded an agreement whereby Xu became the Taiping administrator in the areas under his control, retained his armed detachments, and collected taxes. He was allowed to do with the money what he wished, giving no part of it to the superior Taiping authorities. After this, other landlord militia groups in southern Jiangsu went over to the rebels one by one on much the same terms, with the Taipings coming into at least formal possession of the areas held by the 'white headbands'.

Anglo-French Armed Intervention Against the Taipings

When the Second Opium War was over, the Qing were again able to concentrate on putting down popular risings.

China's defeat had weakened the extreme conservatives in the Qing government who had concerned themselves with maintaining the country's isolation from the outside world. Those dignitaries who, while they had sought to safeguard the feudal order and the rule of the Manchu dynasty, were more tolerant of the Western 'barbarians', gained the upper hand. They wanted Western arms for their troops, and Western aid in fighting the Taiping and other popular rebellions.

The stake the British and French had in maintaining the rule of the Manchus in China increased after the Second Opium War. To the Qing they owed important rights and privileges under the Tianjin treaties and the Beijing agreements. Now they were interested in the earliest possible suppression of popular risings, which were preventing them from exploiting their preferential position.

This made for a favourable climate of co-operation between the Anglo-French colonialists and the Dragon Throne against the liberation movement of the Chinese people.

The British and French governments redoubled their direct armed interference against the Taipings. The British, who had held a place of leadership in the Western aggression against China, set the pace. The aggressive section of the English bourgeoisie launched a systematic anti-Taiping hate campaign at the close of 1860, attuning public opinion at home to Britain's intervention in the Chinese civil war. Their warlike trumpeting blotted out the few voices raised against such interference.

No sooner were the Beijing agreements signed in October 1860 than Elgin gave Grand Duke Gong to understand that Britain was prepared to aid the Manchu government in putting down the Taiping Rebellion. Similar hints were conveyed by Gros, the French diplomat. But at that time the Qing treated the offer of their recent enemies guardedly.

In January 1861, to prevent the seizure of Ningbo and Hankou by the Taipings, the British minister to China sanctioned a demonstration of British naval strength in the Ningbo area. He also made clear that Shanghai should not be taken by the rebels. In March, a British diplomatic agent negotiating with the Taipings told them to stay away from Shanghai and the other treaty ports. A little later, the rebels agreed to stay 50 km distant from Shanghai for a year, provided the city was not used by the Qing as a base for offensive operations against them. But they turned down the British demand concerning the other treaty ports. Thereupon, the British agent 'advised' the Taiping general, Chen Yucheng, who was advancing on Hankou, in menacing tones 'to give up the very thought' of taking the city if he wanted to avoid a clash with the British. Chen was forced to comply.

In May 1861, the British helped the Manchu to buttress defences in Ningbo, which, however, did not prevent the port from being captured by the Taipings. In June, the British minister to Beijing notified the commanding officer of the British naval squadron in Chinese waters that he should be ready to aid the Manchu in suppressing the Taipings, and asked if his squadron could take Nanjing. In September, on the recommendations of its minister in China, the British government undertook to defend the treaty ports from rebels. In October, a joint Anglo-French force pitched into the Nian, who tried to take the treaty port of Yantai in Shandong province. At the close of December 1861, the British military agent in Nanjing tendered obviously provocative demands to the Taiping government, asking for indemnities to cover losses sustained by British traders owing to Taiping operations. He also demanded unimpeded passage along the Yangzi for all ships flying the British flag, and assurances that the Taipings would not come near Shanghai or attack any other treaty ports on the Yangzi. When the Taiping government rejected these demands as groundless, unjust, and prejudicial to its sovereignty, the British agent said he reserved the right to take any measures he would deem fit.

Relations between the Anglo-French colonialists and the Taipings became strained to the extreme in early 1862, when the term for the Taiping promise not to approach Shanghai within 50 km had run out and they headed for the city. On 21 February 1862, British and French troops, assisted by Ward's mercenaries, struck a

sudden blow at the rebel positions near Shanghai.

The attack raised the curtain on an undisguised British and French intervention, in which Americans took an active part. Once the British and French came openly into the civil war it became for the Taipings an anti-colonialist war of national liberation. During joint operations in the Shanghai area in March 1862, the British placed their ships at the disposal of the Manchu authorities, shipping a 9,000-strong force from Anqing across Taiping-held territory.

In May, British and French warships subjected Ningbo to a fierce bombardment, and forced the Taipings to abandon the city. Soon thereafter, an Anglo-French attack was launched in Zhejiang. Ward's mercenaries, whom the Qing called the Ever Victorious Army and a French-officered and French-armed Chinese corps modelled on the same lines, together with a British-armed Chinese contingent led by British officers, took part.

Following Ward's death in October 1862, another American adventurer, H. A. Burgevine, succeeded him as commander of the Ever Victorious Army. But on the insistence of the British, Burgevine was replaced in January 1863 by a British officer, the notorious Charles Gordon, who besides being known as Chinese Gordon is also known as Pasha Gordon for his part in Britain's colonialist adventures in the Ottoman Empire, specifically the Sudan. Under Gordon the Ever Victorious Army, consisting of Chinese, came under the control of the British.

Having cleared the counties adjoining Shanghai and Ningbo of the Taipings in early 1863, the British and French, rather than use their own troops, found it more profitable to use the Ever Victorious Army, the Franco-Chinese corps and the Anglo-Chinese contingent, which were maintained wholly at the cost of the Qing treasury. This suited the Manchu government perfectly, for it feared that any Anglo-French troops penetrating deep inland, would subsequently refuse to leave.

Earlier, in March 1862, the British prevailed on the Manchus to buy warships in Britain for use against the Taipings. On instructions from Beijing, G. Lee, a British subject, bought seven British gunboats and one transport, manned them with British mercenaries, placed the British captain, Sherard Osborn, in command of the squadron, and even designed the flag it should fly.

In the summer of 1863 the squadron arrived in Shanghai. But Osborn and Lee wanted the Manchu government to give them such extensive powers and such independence that the Qing took fright and hastened to get rid of them and of the squadron, selling the ships back to the British at a ludicrously low price.

To be sure, by then the Manchu government no longer needed foreign mercenaries. The undisguised intervention in the civil war of

the British and French, along with the help of American adventurers, had turned the tables in favour of the Dragon Throne, which was now able to finish off the rebels on its own.

Change in the Fortunes of War

The Taipings' military successes in the spring and summer of 1860 gave them new strength. The conquest of rich southern Jiangsu enabled them to right their economic troubles. Volunteers from newly captured areas and mass defections from the defeated Qing armies swelled their ranks. Morale soared.

Seeing this, and aware of the demoralisation of the Qing troops, the Taiping government mounted an offensive west and south-east of Nanjing to clear the middle reaches of the Yangzi, relieve Anqing, which was under siege since the spring of 1860, and regain the strategically important Wuhan group of three cities. Known as the second western march of the Taipings, the campaign opened at the end of September 1860, the time when the Second Opium War was running to its close.

The march along the northern bank of the Yangzi was entrusted to the relatively small army of Chen Yucheng (60,000 to 80,000 men). After abortive attempts to relieve enemy-besieged Anqing in March 1861, it set out in force for Hankou, reached its distant approaches, caused a commotion in the enemy camp, but was compelled to abandon the attempt at taking the city owing to the intervention of British forces. Thereupon, Chen strained to help his fellow-rebels in Anqing.

The offensive along the southern bank was mounted by the far more powerful armies of Li Xiucheng, Li Shixian, Yang Fuqing, Huang Wenjin, and other Taiping commanders. At the end of 1860 they laid siege to the city of Qimen (in southern Anhui), one of the chief camps of Zeng Guofan's Hunan army, but failed to take it owing to lack of co-ordination. Thereupon, Li Shixian led his army east to Zhejiang, while the other commanders backed away in different directions. Li Xiucheng carried on the offensive westward. He crossed the province of Jiangxi on a zigzag course, fighting all along the way, and finally seized the south-eastern counties of Hubei, where some 30,000 local people joined his force. In June 1861, Li's troops approached Wuhan, the end goal of the second western march, to within 80-100 km.

Then, for reasons unknown, he halted, and the following month led his army back nearly the same way across Jiangxi. At the end of September, it crossed into Zhejiang province, where it carried on offensive operations. So, ingloriously, ended the second western

march of the Taipings.

By that time the situation on the northern bank of the Yangzi had deteriorated. Chen Yucheng and a few other Taiping generals tried again and again, and all in vain, to cut the enemy ring round Anqing and to relieve its defenders, whose food stores had long since run out. In early 1861, Qing troops finally broke into Anqing and slaughtered its 20,000-man Taiping garrison (including 5,000 women).

After the fall of the chief Taiping stronghold on the northern bank of the Yangzi, the enemy swiftly over-ran nearly all Taiping-controlled territory on the northern side of the river. Chen Yucheng was pushed back to the region of Luzhou in central Anhui. In May 1862, while in retreat, the 26-year-old general was betrayed, captured, and executed. The Taipings thus lost all their beachheads on the northern bank, while the Hunan army marched on Nanjing from the south and again laid siege to it.

While the rebels were losing ground in Anhui, their troops in Zhejiang under Li Xiucheng and Li Shixian developed a successful offensive. During the summer and autumn of 1861 Li Shixian's forces captured part of Zhejiang and reached the sea coast. On 9 December they took the port of Ningbo, and by the end of December, after a relatively long siege, gained control of the provincial capital of Hangzhou. All of Zhejiang came under rebel rule. Loss of the province, rich in food and other resources, was a telling blow for the Manchus. But it was the last major victory of the Taipings.

In early 1862 rebel troops under Li Xiucheng closed in on Shanghai, but were driven back by foreign troops. A week later the foreigners inflicted another painful defeat on the rebels in the environs of Shanghai. The battles provided clear evidence of the superiority of Western arms, Western training and tactics.

In April and the early half of May the interventionists drove the rebels out of several more areas. But as the operations near Shanghai expanded, it became clear that the colonialist forces were not large enough for any ambitious campaign. They called in the Qing troops they had recently deployed in British ships from the Anqing area to garrison some of the towns and territory they had captured.

Seizing on this, the Taipings went on the offensive, smashed a large Qing force, and soon compelled the interventionists to withdraw to Shanghai. But the enemy launched an attack from Ningbo, which it had captured from the rebels on 10 May. British and French units were deployed there from Shanghai in the summer of 1862, along with part of the Ever Victorious Army, the Franco-Chinese corps, and the Anglo-Chinese contingent.

These comparatively small but well armed units mounted offensive operations in northern Zhejiang, while Qing troops advanced on

southern and western Zhejiang. As a result, by April 1863 the rebels lost most of the territory they had held in the province.

Gradually, the rebels also found themselves hard pressed in Jiangxi, where Anglo-French troops and the Ever Victorious Army acted as a battering ram. In the autumn of 1862, following gory battles, Anglo-French troops cleared a territory with a radius of 50 km round Shanghai, and in the summer of 1863, Qing troops and the Ever Victorious Army seized a few more towns and menaced Suzhou, the chief rebel base in Jiangsu.

While Taiping positions in Zhejiang and Jiangsu fell one by one, Li Xiucheng, who was recalled to Nanjing after the death of Chen Yucheng, endeavoured desperately to break the enemy ring round the Taiping capital. In the autumn of 1862 a large Taiping force under his command mounted a sustained 46-day attack on the enemy fortifications near Nanjing, but failed to make headway. Then, in the spring of 1863, on the orders of Hong Xiuquan, Li's army crossed to the northern bank of the Yangzi and tried to divert enemy forces from Nanjing by an offensive in the central part of Anhui. It suffered considerable casualties and returned to its initial positions. Both these attempts cost the Taipings about 100,000 lives. Powerless to stem the enemy assault at Nanjing, the Taiping troops retreated to Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

By mid-1863 the Taipings were in a precarious situation: they had lost all the earlier conquered territory on the northern bank of the Yangzi, a large part of Zhejiang territory, and important strategic points in Jiangsu province. Their attempts to breach the blockade of Nanjing had been unsuccessful, and the positions in the environs of the Taiping capital were all but untenable. With the active assistance of the Anglo-French interventionists the tables had been sharply turned against them.

The Social-Economic Policy of the Taipings in 1861-1863

There were no changes to speak of in the social-economic and class policy of the Taipings in the concluding stage of the peasant war, except that it became still more inconsistent and contradictory. As before, the rebels acknowledged landlord property in land. As before, they acknowledged tenant-landlord relationships, and obliged landlords to collect and tenants to pay the requisite rent. In rebel-held territory rent and tax offices—either official or semi-official—were in many cases maintained by local landlords under the auspices of the Taiping authorities.

Still, telling blows were struck at the class of feudalists. Its

positions were conclusively undermined. As before, the Taipings exterminated not only Manchus, but also those Chinese landlords, rich men, and officials who had taken part in fighting the rebellion. They confiscated property, including landed property, as being 'devil property'. In some counties, the confiscated land remained in the use of landless or land-poor tenant farmers, but the rent went to the Taiping coffers. In other counties, however, such landed 'devil property', it appears, became in some way the property of tenants.

In many cases, the land of escaped landlords formally remained their property, while elsewhere it was turned over into the possession of peasants. In Wujiang county, Jiangsu province, for example, the Taipings gave peasants official title to the land they tilled that had belonged to fugitive or slain landlords.

As before, the Taipings obliged landlords and rich men to pay an initial contribution in cash and kind (as a token of compliance), then imposed 'special taxes' in addition to the usual duties; here and there they also made them pay various levies on behalf of the poor. Food stocks, clothing, and other property were forcibly expropriated from most landlords and rich families. Landlords could not collect rent unless permitted to do so by the Taiping authorities, and had to follow a strictly circumscribed procedure. Violators were severely punished. In many rebel-held areas, where tenants exerted due pressure, the Taiping authorities ordered landlords to reduce the land rent. And on top of this, in the autumn and winter of 1862 in some counties landlords were temporarily denied the right to collect rent, which was confiscated by the authorities.

In sum, though landed estates and tenant-landlord relations were preserved, landlords were usually subjected to restrictions. One Taiping document said, for example, that 'in provinces, regions, prefectures, counties, and districts conquered by our Heavenly dynasty, rich families do not dare raise their heads and suffer anguish and distress'.³

But, as before, owing to the limitations of their class outlook, the Taipings were inconsistent in their treatment of landlords, rich families, and officials. Intuitively, they saw them as enemies and did what they thought fit to undermine their economic and political positions. But, on the other hand, prompted by ages-old traditions and needing educated people to run their administrative affairs, they put them in important offices in their government. In many places, therefore, landlords retained power and influence, were able to resist the tenants' clamour for rent reductions, and managed to shift most of the tax burden onto the peasants. In so doing, they exploited the ignorance and ingrained subservience of the mass of peasants, the grip of old traditions, and clan relations.

The establishment of the Taipings in southern Jiangsu and

Zhejiang, and their anti-landlord measures, spurred tenants to demand rent reductions. But due to poor organisation and the low level of the tenants' class consciousness, the struggles they launched, sometimes fiercely bitter, erupted spontaneously and spread far from uniformly from county to county. Yet here and there they won substantial concessions. In some counties of southern Jiangsu and in Zhejiang, rents were lowered 10 to 20 per cent, even 50 per cent, in 1861 and 1862. Many tenants refused to pay anything at all.

In other places rent was reduced much less. In a few cases, in fact, it remained as high as under the Qing regime—amounting to some 50 to 60 per cent of the harvest. This was due to the fact that important offices in the rural administration in some counties had fallen into the hands of landlords, who prevented any rent reductions.

The different rents from county to county showed that the Taiping government had no definitive line on the subject and was paying little or no attention to it. Local Taiping authorities acted as circumstances dictated or simply on blind impulse. By and large, they made concessions to the tenants. But in some cases they took the side of landlords, compelling tenants to pay the land rent on pain of reprisals.

The same inconsistency was evident in lowering taxes—a vitally important issue for independent peasants and tax-paying tenants. (And this despite Hong Xiuquan's edict of 2 November 1860 on reducing taxes.)

The basic or land tax was, as a rule, lower than that imposed by the Qing authorities. Besides, as in Jiangsu, the Taipings never collected taxes in cash and kind in full, for they never bothered to determine the actual area of the fields. When natural calamities occurred, they lowered the priorly fixed tax, and frequently relieved peasants of paying it altogether. In Fenghua county (Zhejiang province), in fact, the rebels imposed no taxes on peasants who had plots of less than 5 *mu*. All this was of unquestionable benefit to peasants, notably those who had little land.

But not in all cases did the Taipings observe the peasants' best interests. The land tax in 1861, 1862, and 1863 was higher than in 1860, and this in many counties. Not content, the Taiping authorities often levied taxes and obligatory payments in addition to the existing dues for homestead certificates and the special taxes exacted from rich families—such as a supplementary land tax, a tax for the maintenance of the rural administration, gunpowder, military, fuel, housing, hearth, and dam-repair taxes, and the like. The number of these auxiliary levies quickly rose to more than a score. Some were collected throughout Taiping-held territory, others in nearly all rebel areas, still others in just a few counties. The biggest number of taxes

was levied in Changshu county (18 different taxes) and Jiaxin county (12 different taxes), where key posts in the local administration were held by landlord elements. The auxiliary taxes and collections added up to a tidy sum, often in excess of the basic tax.

The tax pressures naturally angered the peasantry. There was unrest in some counties, merging with tenants' opposition to rent increases. Changshu county, where the taxes and rents were the most oppressive, was an area of active struggles. In the spring and summer of 1861, the peasants there attacked and killed lower-echelon Taiping administrators, and set fire to their houses. All in all, there were several dozen such attacks in 1861 and 1862.

The Taipings' treatment of tradesmen and artisans was just as inconsistent and contradictory. Often, the rebels followed the cue of the landlords, infringing on the interests of tenants and independent peasants, and even suppressing them by force. This doubtless repelled the mass of the toilers, and contributed to the military defeat of the rebels by the joint efforts of Qing government troops and overseas interventionists.

The Foreign Policy of the Taipings in 1861-1864

When Britain's spokesmen were compelled—in pursuance of the rights and privileges they had acquired under the Tianjin and Beijing accords—to make diplomatic contacts with the Taipings, Hong Xiuquan, head of the Taiping state, dealt with them as befitted his naive notion that foreign lands were a barbarian fringe of China. In February and March 1861, he issued several manifestos, requiring the Western powers to recognise him as the 'true ruler' of all lands and nations, enjoining them to live in peace and friendship and to trade with China exclusively in specially appointed places, and instructed the Chinese to treat foreign traders cordially. The British rejected Hong's claims to supremacy, and demanded that the Taipings abide by the terms fixed in treaties Britain had signed with the Qing government. The Taiping government consented, and promised to abstain from attacking Shanghai in 1861.

In the summer and autumn of that year the British and French tried to prevail on the rebels not to attack Ningbo. But the Taipings only promised not to breach the boundaries of the foreign settlement, and to do no harm to foreigners and their property. They also rejected as unfair and unacceptable the British demands, made in December 1861, that they should not attack any treaty ports, allow Chinese junks flying the British flag to pass freely along the Yangzi, and so on. They urged the British to stop making demands

that went against the interests of the Taiping state, and to maintain peaceful relations. In January 1862, when approaching Shanghai, they asked the British and French troops in the city to remain neutral. The colonialists, however, ignored the repeated requests, and mounted an attack. This undisguised support by their 'Western brothers in the Christian faith' of the Manchu 'devils' irritated the Taiping leaders and the mass of rebels. Yet it was not until the closing period of the rebellion that some Taiping leaders, notably Li Xiucheng, finally saw the aggressive essence of the capitalist countries' policy, the disastrous part it played in the undoing of the Taiping rebellion, and the menace it presented to China. Most Taiping leaders, however, who were blindly faithful to Hong Xiuquan's ideology, failed to understand the colonialist nature of Western policy and its consequences for the Chinese people's movement of liberation.

Decline of the Taiping State

As the civil war dragged out, the survival of the Taiping state became more and more pointless. It gravitated increasingly towards degeneration. The government was unable to assess the facts or draw practical conclusions. It was remiss in elaborating and legislating benign social and economic policies, it did not see the need for co-operation with leaders of other popular risings, and so on. Its control over local administrations was no more than tenuous. It chose not to interfere in local affairs, and made no attempt to carry through a single policy in the remoter fringes of its domain. Local officials dealt with most matters on their own. The government's role, especially after the renewal of the Nanjing blockade by the Manchus in 1862, was reduced almost to nought. Communications between the centre and the periphery broke down, and the Taiping government's rule was, in effect, confined to the capital.

The decline of the rebel state was epitomised by the rot that had set in among Taiping officials and military commanders. Army discipline broke down. There was obvious disorganisation. Ranks and titles became objects of speculation. Treason became widespread. Landlords and former Qing officials who had gone into rebel service started mutinies, as in rebel-held Jiangsu in 1861 and 1862. In early 1863, the plotters succeeded in capturing the town of Changshu. A little earlier, in mid-1862, a Taiping general with an army of 60,000 went over to the enemy in Anhui province. And from 1863 on, Taiping princes and military leaders began selling out to the enemy in seemingly endless succession.

The decline of the Taiping state was compounded with military defeats. The rebels had lost faith in their cause after the open Anglo-French intervention on the side of the Qing.

Shi Dakai's March to Sichuan and the End of His Army

Right up to the autumn of 1861, Shi Dakai's army of some 20,000 to 30,000 men was massed in the south-eastern part of Guangxi, waiting for developments. The unfavourable military situation made Shi come back to his earlier idea of a march into Sichuan to set up a new base. In September 1861, his army and the remnants of the routed army of Chen Kai moved north across the central part of Guangxi, avoiding any large concentrations of enemy troops and continuously recruiting among the local peasantry. In February 1862, now 200,000 strong, Shi's army came to the southern bank of the Yangzi at the Hubei-Sichuan border, and tried to cross to the other bank and thrust into the central regions of Sichuan province. But the attempt broke down because, learning of Shi's approach, the Sichuan authorities had brought all effective rivercraft to the northern bank and fortified their side of the river at all probable crossing points.

Swift and turbulent in its upper reaches, the Yangzi with its steep rocky banks and few crossings, which were moreover strongly guarded by Qing troops and the landlord self-defence militia, proved an insurmountable obstacle. The Taipings manoeuvred along the southern bank of the river until the spring of 1863, now in the vicinity of the Sichuan-Guizhou border, now moving to the Sichuan-Yunnan border, now approaching crossing points, now drawing away. True, during this period they re-established contact with detachments that had gone to Guizhou in 1860, and also reinforced their ranks with local rebel detachments and peasant recruits. But Shi's plan of driving into the central regions of Sichuan grew less realistic each month, for the Qing, who had the inner communications of Sichuan at their disposal, used the time to make their fortifications next to impregnable and to gather an immense force in the proximity of the Yangzi crossings.

Shi Dakai misjudged the situation. Becoming aware that he could not force-cross the Yangzi, he decided on a detour across the south-western projection of Sichuan. That territory, inhabited by the small Yizu tribes, was an accumulation of near impassable rocky hills, gorges, and swamps. It had no convenient roads, and no large stores of food. Besides, movement was obstructed by the turbulent and deep mountain rivers Jinshajiang and Daduhe, which formed the

uppermost stretch of the Yangzi. Considering the absence of requisite navigable craft, crossing the rivers was a forbidding problem.

In the early spring of 1863, Shi Dakai finally decided to carry out the planned evasive manoeuvre. To begin with, he directed a vanguard of over 10,000 men along the route to be followed by the main force. It was to make its way to the western and north-western regions of Sichuan, and wait there for the rest of the army. Another group of Taipings was ordered to draw off the enemy to the Sichuan-Guizhou border, and mislead him as to the direction taken by the main force.

In early March, the vanguard crossed the Jinshajiang, passed the gorges in the southern projection of Sichuan, and by the end of the month made it safely across the Daduhe at Dashubao; it drove across the sparsely populated western part of the province, and reached the southern part of Shenxi. But in summer it was routed by Qing troops. In autumn, its remnants joined the Taiping force under Lai Wenguang and Chen Decai, which was then operating in southern Shenxi.

The diversionary column of Shi's army was active for some time in the vicinity of the Sichuan-Guizhou border, then, losing touch with the main force, marched to Guangxi, where it was routed at the end of the year.

The main force under Shi Dakai crossed the Jinshajiang west of Zhaotong in the beginning of May 1863. For a month it had to contend with the next to impassable mountain terrain in the southern projection of Sichuan, until in early June it finally came to a crossing on the Daduhe in the vicinity of the town of Zidadi. Here it was encircled by armed Yizu tribesmen who had been bribed by the Qing authorities. A Qing army, too, took part in the encirclement. Shi's attempts to force-cross the river under enemy fire proved in vain. So did his attempt to break out of the Yizu ring and turn back. With food running out, and seeing no avenue of escape, Shi ordered his men to lay down their arms. His disarmed troops were massacred, and he was executed.

The Rout and Downfall of the Taipings

By the middle of 1863 the Taipings had come to the end of their tether. The defeat of Shi Dakai's group was a disaster. So were the crushing setbacks suffered by the popular anti-Manchu movement headed by various secret societies and sects. The Qing authorities had managed to wipe out nearly all armed resistance in Guangdong, Guangxi, and Sichuan. In March 1863 they succeeded in smashing

the biggest of the Nian formations in Anhui—the army of Zhang Luoxing, who was taken prisoner and executed. Only a group of Nianjuns in Henan of several thousand men, and a detachment of the 'fasters' sect in Guizhou survived. True, the struggle of the Miao in Guizhou and the Moslems in Yunnan continued unabated. But for the Qing they were no longer the menace they had been before.

The Taipings had lost their offensive spirit. They were on the defensive at all points, losing one position after another. The Qing, on the other hand, were methodically developing their offensive in three decisive areas: from Shanghai towards Suzhou and Changzhou, in the Hangzhou area, and round the Taiping capital, Nanjing. Towards the end of July the Qing and the Ever Victorious Army under Gordon closed in on Suzhou from the south. Here, however, they were kept at bay for a long time. Not until December did they finally manage to take the city, and this with the help of a few Taiping commanders who conspired against and assassinated the chief of the Suzhou garrison, General Tan Shaoguang. They let in the enemy, who threw himself upon the Taipings and upon peaceful townsmen, plundered and raped and killed. On 12 December the Qing also captured the city of Wuxi, and approached Changzhou. Here they again ran into desperate resistance. Changzhou did not fall until May 1864, when the Ever Victorious Army came to the aid of the Qing troops. The city was sacked, and nearly all rebels and 12,000 townsmen were killed. A day later, helped by traitors in the rebel ranks, the enemy seized Danyang, one more important Taiping stronghold at the approaches to Nanjing. The 40,000 Taiping force in the area, under Hong Rengan, withdrew in a southerly direction to the Guangde area on the Anhui-Zhejiang border, where it dug in. With the Qing now confident that they could cope with the Taipings on their own, the Ever Victorious Army was disbanded on 31 May.

Even before this, the Taipings had lost the few strategically important positions they had held in Zhejiang. The loss of Suzhou made a crippling impression on the rebel troops. After its fall, the Taiping commanders in the province surrendered in quick succession, letting the enemy into towns and fortresses. That was how, on 1 April 1864, the Manchus regained control of the Taipings' chief citadel in Zhejiang, the city of Hangzhou. By May, the rebels held only a small area at Huzhou on the southern shore of Lake Taihu. For a time this served as the sole asylum for the surviving, badly tattered Taiping troops. Everywhere else, detachments of the Qing army and the landlord militia loosened a reign of terror.

After the defeat of the Taipings in Jiangxi and Zhejiang, the Qing concentrated their efforts on capturing Nanjing, the fate of which

had long since been sealed. In December 1863, Li Xiucheng, who saw this clearly, tried to prevail on Hong Xiuquan to transfer the capital and the main territorial base of the rebels to the interior, to areas that were out of the reach of foreign troops. This, he said, was the only possible salvation. But Hong demurred.

Blockaded by enemy troops, Nanjing had been on starvation rations since the summer of 1863. In the circumstances, Li permitted the populace to leave the city. Between the end of 1863 and the spring of the following year at least 130,000 townsmen departed. Only some 30,000 rebels and their families and a 10,000-man garrison, of which only some 3,000 to 4,000 were battleworthy, stayed on. But though the strength of the besiegers was many times greater and their arms much more advanced, they hesitated, slowly constricting the circle round the city.

At the end of May, when the loss of Zhejiang and the southern part of Jiangsu robbed him of the last glimmer of hope, Hong Xiuquan notified his subjects in a special manifesto that he would ascend to paradise and from there send a celestial host to protect the Taiping capital. A day later, on 1 June, he took a deadly poison. His eldest son, 16-year-old Hong Tian-guifu, was declared the new Heavenly Prince, though owing to his youth he took no part in administrative affairs.

In the beginning of July, Qing troops came hard up to the walls of the city fortress, and began digging tunnels. Headed by Li Xiucheng, the Taipings harried the diggers under cover of darkness, trying in vain to frustrate the enemy plan. On 19 July, the Manchus blew up the city wall along a 40-metre stretch, and broke into the breach. Fierce fighting ensued in the city streets. The rebels fought desperately until nearly all of them were dead. Only a small detachment with Li Xiucheng, who also took along Hong Tian-guifu, broke out of Nanjing at night through a breach in the city wall and fled in a south-easterly direction. Along the way, Li fell behind the main body because he had given his mount to the young Heavenly Prince. He was recognised by villagers and turned over to the enemy in the hope of a reward. Confined to a wooden cage, Li followed Zeng Guofan's suggestion and wrote a long confession containing valuable material for the history of the Taiping peasant war. On 7 August 1864, he was executed in Nanjing on the orders of Zeng Guofan.

In the meantime, Heavenly Prince Hong was brought to Hong Rengan's army. Retreating south in October 1864, Hong Rengan and the young prince were captured. They were executed in Nanjing the following month. With the death of Hong Tian-guifu, the Taiping state ceased to exist even formally. But remnants of Taiping troops carried on the unequal struggle for still a number of years.

Two large groups of Taipings survived after the fall of Nanjing—one south and one north of the Yangzi. The southern group, numbering more than 100,000, had no unified command. Engaging a numerically superior enemy force, a part of the group was routed in August-October 1864. While some of its men took to their heels, the rest surrendered. Two groups—one of 50,000 men under Li Shixian and the other of 20,000-30,000 under Wang Haiyang—fought their way to the southern part of Fujian province in October 1864, captured Zhanzhou and a few other towns, and hung on for more than half a year. In mid-May 1865, a large Qing force crushed Li Shixian's army. Li and a small force of survivors escaped to the hills. Wang Haiyang, hard pressed by the enemy, retreated to the Fujian-Guangdong border. On 13 August, Li Shixian and the remnants of his troop turned up in Wang's camp, and accused him of withholding aid in the decisive May battles while stationed in the vicinity. Fearing Li's revenge, Wang had him killed. Thereupon, for a number of months, he ranged back and forth in Guangdong along the Fujian border. In January 1866 he was gravely wounded, and soon died. In February, his detachments were beaten and scattered by a superior enemy force. That was the end of the southern group of remnants of the once formidable Taiping army.

The other group, on the northern bank of the Yangzi, consisted of the troops of Chen Decai and Lai Wenguang, who joined forces with Nian units in Henan in April 1864. In spring they had tried to break out of Henan to the aid of beleaguered Nanjing, but were halted by the enemy in the vicinity of the Hubei-Anhui border. In November, in a bloody engagement at Huoshan, the Qing badly mauled the Taiping and Nian troops, and Chen Decai took his own life. The surviving Taiping and Nian forces came under the command of Lai Wenguang and Zhang Zongyu (Zhang Luoxing's nephew). In the vast territory of Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Jiangsu and Shandong, the rebels wore out the enemy by endless marches and sudden engagements. In May 1865, they wiped out a large Qing force under Sengerinching, who was killed in battle, at Jiaozhou, Shandong province.

In 1866, the Taiping-Nianjun army broke up into two columns: eastern and western. The eastern under Lai Wenguang, consisting of several tens of thousands, operated in Henan, Hubei, Shandong, and Jiangsu, and inflicted several defeats on the Qing. But in the latter half of 1867 it was surrounded by superior enemy forces in Jiangsu, and was completely wiped out by early 1868. Lai Wenguang was captured, and was executed in Yangzhou in January 1868.

The western column of about 60,000 rebels, under Zhang Zongyu, conducted a war of manoeuvre in Henan, Shenzhi, Shanxi, Zhili, and Shandong, and scored a number of major victories. In 1868,

it even menaced Beijing. But in August of that year it was finally surrounded by a large Manchu force at Chiping in Shandong province, and annihilated. Zhang Zongyu, committed suicide rather than surrender.

That rang down the curtain on the 18-year-long peasant war of the Taipings, which shook the feudal Qing rule in China to its foundations.

Chapter 7

'SELF-STRENGTHENING' OF THE QING EMPIRE 1860-1895

Qing dignitaries in the provinces and the imperial capital had their eyes opened by the two opium wars and Anglo-French operations against the Taipings to the vast superiority of Western arms. It dawned on them that, what with the antediluvian arms of the Manchu-Chinese troops, they needed the assistance of Western states, specifically Britain, France, and the U.S.A., to put down the rebellious Chinese peasantry and the non-Han peoples. Even as the Second Opium War was being fought, there appeared advocates of adopting or learning what they called barbarian or foreign matters (*yi wu* or *yang wu*). What they were interested in, of course, was how to make Western firearms and artillery, steamships, and ammunition—the items which they thought had given the English and French a military victory over China. They clamoured for peace with the British and French, and were ready—to please the Western powers—to make China's isolation from the outside world a little less airtight, and to conduct relations with foreign lands by accepted Western methods (exchanging embassies, concluding treaties and agreements, and so on). The advocates of learning 'foreign matters' also wanted adjustments in the administrative system to facilitate the conduct of relations with foreign powers and control over foreign trade.

The 'Self-Strengthening' Policy During the Suppression of Peasant and Minority Risings

The doctrine of learning 'foreign matters', that is, of adopting the military-technical achievements of the West, was in some ways the theoretical foundation for the imperial policy of 'self-strengthening' set in motion after the Second Opium War ended in 1860 and continued until the outbreak of the 1894-1895 war with Japan. The purpose of 'self-strengthening' was to buttress the feudal military and

bureaucratic apparatus of the Qing Empire and to give it muscle enough to combat popular peasant and other movements.

Grand Duke Gong, his father-in-law Gui Liang, who was a member of the Imperial Secretariat, and Wen Xiang, a member of the Military Council were the most highly placed and influential Manchu dignitaries who espoused the doctrine of learning from the West. Out of the eminent Chinese provincial dignitaries their views were shared, in particular, by the imperial viceroy of Liangjiang, Zeng Guofan, who was, in effect, the supreme commander of anti-Taiping operations in the basin of the Yangzi and leader of the Hunan landlord clique, Li Hongzhang, leader of the Chinese landlord group in Anhui, and Zuo Zongtang, a prominent member of the Hunan clique.

The ultra-conservatives put up a bitter fight. Acrid antagonists of anything Western, who saw the technical innovations of the West as a threat to revered patriarchal traditions, as a 'betrayal' of the ancestral dogma and a hazard to Manchu rule in China, they were dead set against learning from 'barbarians'.

Probably the most learned among those who advocated learning from the West was Wei Yuan, scholar, writer, and politician (1794-1856). He had produced a number of capital works on the history of the Yuan dynasty, the military history of the Qing, and on classical philology. But probably best known of all was his encyclopaedic opus on the geography of foreign lands, *Hai guo tu zhi*, which he all but completed in 1842 and which saw three editions in his lifetime: 1844 in 50 *juans* (volumes), 1847 in 60, and 1852 in 150. The gazetteer contained information borrowed from various foreign and Chinese sources in geography, economics, politics, and culture. It was written under the fresh impression created by China's defeat at the hands of capitalist Britain in the First Opium War, and along with extensive factual material presented judgements and recommendations of its author, who was during the war the personal secretary of Yu Qian, the acting viceroy of Liangjiang province who took his life when the British captured the Zhoushan islands.

In the preface to his gazetteer, Wei Yuan said he had written it because China had to learn to 'use barbarians to control barbarians', 'to learn the technical skills of barbarians to use them against other barbarians', and to 'use barbarians to penetrate the camp of barbarians'.¹ Among the 'technical skills' that had fired his imagination Wei Yuan named steamships, firearms, and military training. He urged adoption of Western techniques, and recommended building an arsenal and shipyard in Guangdong with the help of foreign technicians and gunnery instructors. He also advised founding an office to translate 'barbarian' books, introducing naval science as a subject in military examinations, and better provision and maintenance of troops, whose numbers he advised reducing. Wei Yuan pleaded

with the ruling elite to shake off its apathy, and to promote able people to high posts. Many of these ideas Wei Yuan had borrowed from Lin Zexu, who as viceroy of Liangguang had encouraged the translation of foreign books and newspaper reports, and who had published the first geographical description of foreign countries, *Sizhou zhi*, in Guangzhou in 1840, which Wei Yuan reproduced almost whole in his gazetteer.

During Wei Yuan's lifetime, the gazetteer did not, for some reason, arouse any special interest at the court. For that matter, neither did another geography of foreign countries, *Yin huan zhi lue*, by the governor of Fujian province, Xu Jiyu (1795-1873), published in 1850, which had better maps and contained fewer inaccuracies than Wei Yuan's. In fact, Xu Jiyu was removed from office on the insistence of conservative courtiers. His book was destroyed by order of the throne.

Not until after the Second Opium War did Wei Yuan's book and its practical recommendations capture the court's attention. In July 1858, the senior deputy of the chief of the Military Council, one Wang Maoyin, advised the emperor and his court to read Wei's *Hai guo tu zhi* which, as he put it, presented 'methods of defence, attack, and negotiation'. Wang also advised the emperor to alter the system of official examinations and to include tests in history, warcraft, engineering, mathematics, astronomy, and geography, laying emphasis on 'practical knowledge' rather than the archaic art of writing eight-legged essays (*bagu*).

Another prominent advocate of the doctrine of adopting Western technical and military novelties was the eminent *shenshi* scholar and teacher from Suzhou, Feng Guifen (1809-1875), who had fought the Taipings in the field and had been adviser and *confidant* of Li Hongzhang from early 1862, when Li came to Shanghai to supervise operations in the rear of the Taipings. (The idea of setting up this new anti-Taiping front had, in fact, originated with Feng Guifen.) Feng was also author of a number of memorials to Beijing over Li Hongzhang's signature with suggestions of utilising certain Western technical innovations. In 1861, Feng produced a collection of some fifty of his essays on various social and political issues, entitled *Protests from the Study of Jiao Binlu* (*Jiao Binlu kangyi*). Initially circulated as a manuscript, the collection was not published until 1883, though the views it set forth, related to those of Wei Yuan, were widely known already in the 1860s. Feng held that the Confucian ethic needed buttressing, and advised taking no more from Western science than what had given the West its strength. To invigorate the Confucian ideology, Feng advised restoring the ancient institution of 'village elders', that is, giving Chinese landlords and *shenshi* greater powers in handling local (rural) affairs. He also recommended

renovating the system of official examinations, and teaching foreign languages and mathematics in schools. But he lost no opportunity to extol the moral and ethical superiority of the Chinese, styled all other nations as barbarian and, in effect, admitted of borrowing nothing but steamships and firearms from the Western countries. In an essay, *On the Adoption of Western Knowledge*, Feng wrote that the principles of the sacred teaching of Confucius, expounded in China since ancient times, were the basis of all knowledge and that now this original foundation should be supplemented with just those methods that the Western powers had used to attain prosperity and military power. 'Chinese [Confucian] science is the foundation, while the Western is purely supplementary,'² Feng observed, and called for 'reliance on our own resources'. He was an ideologue of the Chinese feudal military cliques which strained to put down the rebellious peasantry, and at once secure a certain amount of independence from the Manchu government.

In 1862, the scholar Yin Zhaoyong, a resident of the imperial capital, submitted a memorial to the court in which, proceeding from the observations he had made in Shanghai while fighting against the Taipings, he recommended a policy of 'self-strengthening', which he defined as maintaining diplomatic ties with foreigners, reorganising the armed forces, supplying the army with modern ships and guns, and studying foreign newspapers.

Following China's defeat in the Second Opium War and as a result of the Tianjin (1858) and Beijing (1860) treaties, capitalist Britain and France saddled the Qing with terms that laid the country wide open to foreign penetration. But the cessation of hostilities enabled the Dragon Throne to use all available troops for putting down peasant and minority risings. The stake the capitalist powers had in the earliest possible stabilisation of the situation in China after they had wrested such enormous concessions from the Manchus, led to nothing short of a military alliance of Manchu-Chinese feudalists and Anglo-French colonialists against the embattled people of China.

Diplomatic relations and trade with the Western powers caused the numbers and influence of advocates of adopting Western military technology to increase. In a memorial endorsed by Emperor Xianfeng on 13 January 1861, Grand Duke Gong, Gui Liang, and Wen Xiang recommended establishing an Office in General Charge of Affairs Concerning All Foreign Nations (*Zongli geguo shiwu yamen*, known as *Zongli yamen*), which would 'be singly responsible' for the conduct of foreign affairs. Though the memorial was shot through with conceit and arrogance in relation to other countries, which its authors referred to as 'barbarians' and 'savages', it admitted that in the circumstances the Qing court had no choice but to follow the ancient Chinese maxim: 'Resort to peace and friendship when circumstances

compel, but consider war and defence the basic policy.'³

The immediate objective, the writers of the memorial held, was to combat the threat that they alleged came from tsarist Russia, and also from Britain, which, they wrote, 'though it pursued the goals of trade, behaved as a predator and had not the least notion of human decency'.⁴ The memorial writers thought the objective feasible if the provisions of the treaties concluded with foreign powers were strictly abided by, conceding them nothing in excess of what had been precisely defined in these instruments. The memorial contained six proposals:

1. To establish in the capital an Office (Zongli yamen) as a provisional specialised institution under the immediate supervision of Manchu princes and the heads of the six ministries; the Office would be subject to dissolution 'as soon as the military campaigns were concluded and the affairs of the various countries set in order', whereupon its functions would, as before, be vested in the Military Council.

2. To institute the offices of two imperial special commissioners (*beiyang dachen* and *nanyang dachen*) to supervise affairs in the northern and southern ports open to foreign trade—Tianjin, Niu-zhuang, and Chifu (Yantai) in the North, and Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Amoy, Ningbo and Shanghai in the South.

3. To collect in ports open to foreign trade customs duties on foreign goods for the imperial treasury.

4. To collect and exchange information about foreigners; this was to be done by officials in charge of foreign relations in various provinces in order to avoid mistakes in future dealings with foreign states.

5. To select two able persons from Guangzhou and two others from Shanghai who knew foreign languages, and to send them to Beijing for employment by the Zongli yamen.

6. To collect in all ports information on internal and external trading conditions, and foreign newspaper reports, and to forward them each month to the Zongli yamen.

The emperor put his vermilion seal of approval to this memorial. In the imperial edict of 20 January 1861 the new office was named *Zongli geguo tongshang shiwu yamen*. Unlike the other central institutions of the empire (the Imperial Secretariat and the six ministries), where the top offices were held by an approximately equal number of Manchus and Chinese, the Zongli yamen was from the outset conceived as an instrument to strengthen the power of the Manchus and give the Qing court undivided control over the empire's foreign relations.⁵ The Zongli yamen consisted of a collegium comprising the highest dignitaries, and of a small staff of officials. The imperial edict of 20 January 1861 appointed Grand Duke Gong, the emperor's younger half-brother, head of the yamen and named the Manchus

Gui Liang and Wen Xiang his deputies. In 1862, four more members were appointed to the Zongli yamen, out of whom three were top-ranking officials of the Office of Taxes (the chief and his two deputies)—a fact that underscored the importance of taxation for the payment of indemnities to Britain and France. By 1869, the number of members of the Zongli yamen had gone up to ten, and subsequently ranged between nine and eleven. Eventually, the bureaucratic apparatus of the Office was divided into five departments, those of Britain, France, Russia, the United States, and a naval department. The Russian department also dealt with Japanese affairs, and the U.S. department with the affairs of Germany, Peru, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, and Portugal. In due course, in addition to dealing with the maritime defence of the southern and northern ports and ports on the Yangzi, the naval department supervised the manufacture of guns, building of shipyards, purchase and manufacture of steamships, arms, ammunition, and machinery, and construction of telegraph lines, railways, and mines in various provinces of the empire, that is, the whole range of matters involved in the policy of 'self-strengthening'.

Nearly all members of the Zongli yamen also occupied some other high office, so that the yamen became a kind of council of leading imperial statesmen.

In August 1861, Emperor Yi Zhu (reign title Xianfeng) died in Rehe province. His little son, Zai Shun, was made the new emperor. The council of regents, comprising eight dignitaries from the late emperor's retinue entrusted with all state affairs during the emperor's minority, was under the sway of Xianfeng's favourite, the Manchu Su Shun, chief of the Office of Taxes, who had in the previous three years—the last three of Yi Zhu's lifetime—held the reins of power in the empire. A rogue and embezzler, Su Shun took firm measures against the neglect of generals and dignitaries to strengthen the Qing bureaucratic and military machinery, and tried to marshal resources for the conduct of military operations against the rebellious Chinese peasantry and the Anglo-French invaders. Defying the Manchu nobility, he promoted Chinese scholars and landlords (Hu Linyi, Zeng Guofan, Zuo Zongtang, and others) to high posts in the army and the civil apparatus. In his view, consolidation of the class alliance of the Manchu nobility and the Chinese feudalists was vital both to cope with the peasant rebellions and to repulse Britain and France. Su Shun wanted China to remain isolated from the outside world, and in Xianfeng's lifetime had opposed the emperor's return to Beijing from Rehe following the conclusion of the peace treaties with Britain and France and the evacuation of the Anglo-French troops from the imperial capital. In his belief the removal of the court to Rehe would enable the government to overlook some of the terms of

the Tianjin and Beijing treaties, and thereupon again close the empire to foreigners.

Su Shun's policy alienated a considerable section of the Manchu nobility, notably those who favoured surrender to the Western powers and were prepared to make new concessions to secure the swiftest possible conclusion of the war against the Chinese peasantry. Especially hostile to Su and his schemes was the mother of the young emperor, the 25-year-old empress dowager Yehonala, a Manchu later known under her court title Cixi, meaning the merciful and the dispenser of happiness. Cixi, a woman of intelligence and energy, and with a consuming lust for power, feared rightly that Su Shun, who controlled the council of regents, would not suffer her to influence policy. She came to an understanding with the two half-brothers of the late Emperor Xianfeng—the 28-year-old Grand Duke Gong who had, staying behind in Beijing, signed treaties with the powers and assumed a place of prominence in the country's political life, and 20-year-old Prince Chun (Yi Huan), married to Cixi's younger sister—to remove Su Shun and the other members of the council of regents.

When escorting the coffin with the body of the late emperor to Beijing from Rehe in early November 1861, the members of the council of regents were arrested on reaching the outskirts of the imperial capital. Su Shun was decapitated on 8 November, and the rest of the regents were subjected to various other punishments. Cixi and the elder widow of the late emperor, the childless Empress Cian, formed a dual regency, which came to be known as *chui lian ting zhen* (listening to reports on state affairs from behind screens), for it was considered improper for dignitaries to cast their eyes on the emperor's wives.⁶ The reign of Cixi's young son was thus referred to as *tongzhi* or 'joint control' (1861-1870). Grand Duke Gong was initially made prince counsellor. (In 1865 Cixi stripped him of the honorary title and took all state affairs into her own hands; the other empress dowager, Cian, who had removed herself from politics, contradicted her in nothing).

As a result of this overturn, the advocates of relations with the Western states, whose leader was Grand Duke Gong, gained ascendancy in the Qing government.

The Cixi-Gong coalition saw the chief threat to Qing rule in the anti-government activity of the peasantry led by the Taipings, the Nian, and the many secret societies. In the memorial on the institution of the Zongli yamen, in fact, Gong and his followers observed that 'the Nian rebellion is ablaze in the North and the Taiping in the South', and added, 'The Taiping and Nian bandits are gaining victories one after another, imperilling our heart and bowels'. For this reason, they maintained, 'the rebellion of the Taipings and the Nian should be put down first'.⁷

Though the memorial did not yet contain the later popular word *zhiqiang* (self-strengthening), it expounded what was in effect the same thing: 'to plan revival by ourselves' (*zi tu zhen xing*).

The memorial on troop training submitted by Grand Duke Gong, Gui Liang, and Wen Xiang, and approved by an imperial edict of 15 January 1861, said in so many words that 'self-strengthening should be a fundamental policy, the art of which consists in training troops'.⁸ The writers noted that it was essential 'for attaining revival' to suppress the rebellions of Taipings and Nianjuns, and that if this was to be done the army should be trained in modern methods of combat with the use of foreign arms. 'If the internal calamities are eliminated, the external threat will drop away by itself,' they observed.⁹ The same emphasis on military power as the centrepiece of 'self-strengthening' is found in a memorial by Grand Duke Gong and the other members of the Zongli yamen (approved on 2 June 1864). The memorial says: 'The fair way of governing the country is represented by self-strengthening. Any thorough study of the policy of self-strengthening makes clear that the main element in it is to train troops, and the training of troops must in turn start with the production of arms.'¹⁰

The interpretation of 'self-strengthening' as a policy of 'increasing the power of the state' to end internal turmoil is also found in other documents of the period. Though to pacify public opinion the rulers of the empire did not forgo saying that the country's strengthening was meant to counter outside aggression, the chief purpose was not at all repulsing invaders. Zeng Guofan, for example, admitted in one of his letters: 'When you have contacts with foreigners ... you must earnestly strive to make your military power adequate so that you can stand on your own feet. At first, by ourselves, let us suppress the rebels in one or two places where our sternness and bravery will not be ridiculed by foreigners, and then we can come close to them, and it will not be too late.... We shall in time certainly achieve harmony with them.' In another letter, quoting Confucius as saying, 'If you can rule your own country, who dares to insult you?' Zeng added: 'The way to win the hearts of people coming from afar lies in this, and the method of self-strengthening also lies in this.'¹¹

In a report on Western military methods addressed to the Zongli yamen in June 1863 and forwarded for approval to the emperor, Li Hongzhang called for the swiftest possible adoption of modern weapons, and for manufacturing them in China. He feared that such arms could fall into the hands of rebel peasants. 'Let us suppose,' he wrote, 'that in some nook of the mountains or some corner of the sea there are worthless rogues who learn the Western methods under cover, secretly originate some new principles, and suddenly stop tilling the land, and show their superior ability in making new

weapons.... How can we resist them?'¹² When turning over Li's memorial *On China's Defensive Strategy* to the emperor, the Zongli yamen warned that 'the common people should still be forbidden to learn about and use these weapons'.

When the Taiping peasant war, that chief danger to the Qing regime, was over, the 'self-strengthening' policy acquired certain new overtones (though its chief purpose of strengthening Qing control over the empire remained the same). In a memorial that received the emperor's approval on 20 September 1865, Li Hongzhang wrote: 'Today manufacture of machines is the chief means of defence against enemies and the foundation of self-strengthening.'¹³ The importance of learning to make machines and producing steamships and guns in China was inferred from the disadvantages of buying munitions abroad.

In the years that followed, prominent Chinese generals and statesmen produced varying conceptions of the 'self-strengthening' policy.

In another memorial to the emperor, dated 25 January 1867, urging that a scientific department of astronomy and mathematics and other Western knowledge should be added to the foreign languages school in Beijing, the Zongli yamen examined and refuted the objections of the conservative wing: 'At present China must at any price concern itself with self-strengthening; those who understand the circumstances of the present time will not deny that the road to self-strengthening implies studying and assimilating Western science in order to make machines and weapons of the Western type.'¹⁴

The authors of the memorial drew the emperor's attention to Japan, which had shortly before sent students to Britain to learn languages, astronomy, and mathematics. They argued that if a small country like Japan was strengthening itself so energetically, China could not afford to continue to stagnate and give no thought to revival.

Another distinguished advocate of 'self-strengthening', Zeng Guofan, reporting in a memorial to the emperor of 17 October 1868 that the first Chinese steamship had been launched at the shipyard in Shanghai, expressed confidence that in future China would build large ships by itself, and observed that 'building modern ships is the road to the self-strengthening of the country'.

The viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang, Zuo Zongtang, also held that shipbuilding was 'for China the turning point whereby the poor and weak country could be transformed into a rich and strong country'. Still, Zuo never tired of saying that Confucian ethics was incalculably more important for China than Western technical skills.

Though there were some differences as to the methods of 'self-strengthening', all the practical steps under that head were clearly motivated by anxiety over the internal situation. The chief aim of the Manchu-Chinese feudalists was to put down all movements of

the people. This was the angle from which the Qing assessed innovations borrowed from abroad. When in early October 1867 the Zongli yamen circularised the high provincial authorities to obtain their views on revising the treaties concluded with Western states and on introducing innovations such as railways and telegraph lines, Li Hongzhang, while voicing approval of the novelties, recommended concentrating on the suppression of civil unrest.

The most essential motive of 'self-strengthening' was to build Western-type arsenals, shipyards, gunpowder and munitions factories, and so on, in order to supply Chinese feudal landlord armies with guns, rifles, and warships. In 1861, Zeng Guofan founded the first modern arsenal in Anqing, only just recaptured from the Taipings. Though manual labour predominated, the munitions factory produced cartridges, shells, and gunpowder. Besides, it built a small steamboat.

In 1862, Li Hongzhang opened an arsenal in Shanghai. It made cartridges and gunpowder. Its chief administrator was an Englishman, Halliday Macartney (later adviser of the Manchu diplomatic mission in London). After the Taipings had been driven out of Suzhou, part of its equipment was moved there. The Suzhou arsenal was also given the machinery and lathes originally brought from England to make shells for the flotilla of British ships purchased by the Qing. In January 1864, the arsenal began putting out cartridges, shells, mines, and detonators.

In 1865 the arsenal founded by Li Hongzhang was merged with a small foreign-built munitions factory in Shanghai, which its foreign owners sold to the Chinese authorities. An administration was set up to run the two enterprises known as the Jiangnan arsenal. Here the first large Chinese-built steamship was launched in 1868. A little later, Li Hongzhang transferred the Suzhou arsenal to Nanjing and established an administration to run what came to be known as the Jianglin Arsenal.

In 1864, Zuo Zongtang founded a shipyard in Hangzhou. Two years later, he transferred it to Mawei, near Fuzhou, where he expanded it. A special administration was set up to run this, then the country's biggest, shipbuilding enterprise.

Thereupon, in quick succession, arsenals and engineering works began going up in Tianjin, Xian, Guangzhou, Jilin, Lanzhou, and Chengdu. Their construction was initiated by the chiefs of regional Chinese feudal military-bureaucratic groups, who were also the leading consumers of what these enterprises put out. The arms, like those imported from abroad, were used against peasant rebels and to suppress the anti-Manchu risings of non-Han minorities.

Advocates of 'self-strengthening' were the buttress of the dynasty. They were in the thick of the fighting to put down the Taipings and

other peasant and minority risings. After the fall of Nanjing and the collapse of the Taiping state, government troops pursued and engaged the remnants of the Taiping armies in Jiangxi, Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong provinces. The mopping up went on for well over two years—from 1864 into 1866. The foreign-equipped Huai army, meanwhile, took on the anti-Manchu and anti-feudal Nian movement, which had been active for 16 years—until 1868—and engulfed eight provinces.

The plunder and carnage visited on the civilian population by government troops grew to proportions which made the emperor exclaim that the populace in North China was more terrified of the imperial armies than of 'bandit' rebels. He issued an edict on 23 September 1867 ordering his generals to tighten discipline in the ranks.

The soldiers of government and local landlord armies had their own secret societies. Many of these, indeed, like the Qingbang and Hongbang, survived until the republican period. In 1868-1869, when Zuo Zongtang's army was being rushed from the Yangzi to North-West China to put down a rising of Mohammedan Dungans, officers learned that the rank and file, mainly men of the former Xiang army that had fought the Taipings, were enrolled in the Gelaohui secret society almost to a man. By wile and artifice, Zuo Zongtang wormed himself into a place of authority in the secret society, and even became its *dalongtou* or head of the big dragon. After learning the names of the leaders, the communication lines, and other secrets of the Gelaohui, he made short work of all echelons of its leadership and stopped up all avenues of communication.¹⁵ Meanwhile, at his request, the Qing government issued one more edict outlawing the society. In his memorial to the emperor, Zuo said the society was active among troops in the Liangjiang, Lianghu, Guizhou, and Sichuan provinces, and that it was spreading its tentacles to Shenxi and Gansu owing to the deployment of troops there from Central and East China. The government wanted the chiefs and members of the society strictly punished, especially if they were officers or men of the government army or civil officials. A government decree called for ruthless action against disbanded soldiers of the former provincial anti-Taiping militia who had joined the Gelaohui. Local authorities were instructed to circulate the decree widely in the army and among the civilian population.

By 1873, Xi Baotian, a Hunan general whose troops had foreign-made rifles and mountain guns, succeeded in crushing the 18-year-long insurrection of Miao tribes. Roughly eight out of every ten Miao settlements had been wiped off the face of the earth, and nearly all their young men had been killed. It was estimated that the tribes had lost something like a million people. Li Peijing, governor

of Guizhou, admitted that no more than one-tenth of the population survived in his province after the nearly twenty years of upheaval.

Manchu-Chinese troops finally succeeded after 17 years of bitter fighting to put an end to the Yunnan insurrection by the beginning of 1873. Only 3.5 million survived out of the eight million population of the province. The punitive operations in Yunnan were headed by an advocate of 'self-strengthening', Cen Yuying, leader of the anti-Taiping scholar-landlord militia of Guangxi. Loosening carnage on the local non-Han population for supporting the insurrection, the punitive troops sent the head of Du Wenxiu (Sultan Suleiman), the chief of the Moslem state of Pingnan guo (1856-1872), and 24 baskets of the ears of executed rebels to the Qing capital as proof of their 'valour'.

In 1862, an insurrection erupted among the Dungans in the north-western regions of the empire. The rebellion was directed against feudal exploitation and religious persecution, and was headed by secular and religious feudal leaders Ma Hualong, Ma Zhanao, Ma Dexin, and Ma Zhaoyuan. The Dungans, who were descendants of Central Asian Turkic tribes forcibly resettled by the Chinese during the Tang dynasty in what had become the provinces of Shenxi, Gansu, and Qinghai, had mixed with the Chinese (Han) population but retained the Mohammedan faith and their old customs. Throughout, they had been a target of discrimination and brutal feudal exploitation. The Dungan rising was precipitated by the introduction of new taxes to pay for the Qing's war against the Taipings. The chief motor of the rising was the Dungan peasants. As the rising progressed, leadership was assumed by the son of an urban district elder, Bai Yanhu (Mohammed Ayub Bianhu), an irreconcilable rebel consumed with hatred for the Manchu-Chinese regime. He sought to unite all anti-Qing forces, including the Taiping and Nian forces that had retreated to North-West China.

In 1866, the emperor appointed Zuo Zongtang viceroy of Shenxi and Gansu. Dreading a military alliance between the Nian and the rebel Dungans in the two provinces, the Qing marshalled all available forces to isolate and wipe out the Nian rebels. Until the end of 1868, therefore, viceroy Zuo, along with other Manchu and Chinese generals, had his hands full hitting the Nian in Shanxi, Henan, Shandong, and Zhili.

In 1869, Zuo was finally able to throw the full weight of his army against the Dungans. The brutality with which he went about it caused even the Qing court to shudder; the Dragon Throne felt constrained to warn that 'unnecessary killing only incited rebellion'.

Zuo's soldiers killed Dungans indiscriminately, showing no mercy to old people, women and children. Only small numbers managed to escape from Shenxi to the provinces of Gansu and Qinghai, to Eastern

Turkestan, and into Russian territory. In 1873, after a violent assault, Suzhou in Gansu province finally fell into Qing hands, and by 1875 the Dungan insurrection, which had lasted twelve years, was finally crushed.

The Russian natural scientist and physician, P.Y. Piasetsky, who travelled in North-West China in 1875, described in his travel notes scenes of waste and destruction, the consequence of the punitive operations against the Dungan rebels: 'All villages in the proximity of the road were frighteningly ravaged, the houses gutted and demolished to their foundations.... Not a single tree survived in the village streets—all were badly burned and now stand shrivelled. There are no people amidst the ruins.... All the villages we passed on our way were nothing but rubble.'¹⁶

In 1864, the indigenous population of Eastern Turkestan—Uighurs, Kirghizes, and Tajiks—conquered by Qing armies in 1757-1759, rose up against its oppressors, who had forts and cantonments of Manchu and Chinese troops at key points. Qing power was crushed, and a feudal theocratic Moslem state arose under Buzruk Khan, son of Djahangir of the Uighur Hadj dynasty who had ruled Eastern Turkestan before the Qing conquest and had led an abortive rebellion against the Manchu-Chinese in Kashgaria in 1825-1828.

By 1873, leadership of the rebellion fell into the hands of the Buzruk Khan's general, Yakub beg of Kokand. Prior to this, following two campaigns against the Dungan Urumchi Sultanate established in 1864 during the Dungans' fight against the Qing in Dzungaria, Yakub beg had extended his influence to that area and entered into an alliance with the Dungans against the Manchu-Chinese.

As reported by K. Skachkov, the Russian consul in Chuguchak, 'the Dungans rose against the Manchus not for reasons of religious fanaticism, but for the same reasons as the Chinese are rising against them in all the provinces of their far-flung empire for already the fifteenth year: the universal disaffection in China for the rule and cupidity of the Manchus'.¹⁷

Yakub beg made contacts with the British colonial authorities in India, whose support against the Qing he expected to consolidate his rule. The English were indeed willing to help, for they wanted to turn Eastern Turkestan into a Moslem state dependent on Britain or, as an English biographer of Yakub beg put it, serving as 'the gates to the markets of Bokhara and Kuldja'. In 1874, Yakub beg concluded an unequal treaty with a British agent by name of Forsythe, who was on his second visit to Kashgar from India at the head of a military expedition bringing a large quantity of arms. Under the treaty, British subjects were free to travel throughout Yakub beg's Moslem state of Djetishaar (state of seven cities) for commercial and other purposes, and were granted extraterritoriality. To further their anti-Russian

policy, the British also promoted close relations between the Turkish Sultan and Yakub beg. Military instructors and large amounts of arms were sent to Kashgar from Turkey. This occurred shortly before the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, and naturally perturbed St Petersburg. The Russian tsar feared for the future of his possessions in Central Asia, which had for years whetted British colonial appetites.

In 1873, the chief of the Dungan rising in North-West China, Mohammed Ayub Bianhu, who had escaped into Dzungaria with seven thousand men and established himself in Urumchi, joined Yakub beg. But in 1875, after more than two years of priming, Zuo Zongtang issued the order to march, and by the beginning of 1878 wiped out all seats of resistance in Eastern Turkestan and Dzungaria. Yakub beg took his life, while Bianhu and his Dungan force found asylum in Russia.

In 1884, the Qing converted Eastern Turkestan and Dzungaria into Xinjiang province. Government troops garrisoning Xinjiang established stringent controls over the local population. But the appalling damage done by Manchu-Chinese punitive armies to the productive forces of the large region was not made good throughout the period of modern history.

The suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, the Nian insurrection, and that of non-Han minorities had carried away over 60 million lives. The cost of the punitive expeditions fell heavily upon the shoulders of the common people. They were reduced to such desperate pecuniary straits that in the 1860s the authorities had had to look for new ways of financing their punitive campaigns. In 1869, for example, Zuo Zongtang obtained funds for his march on the rebellious Dungans by establishing a number of new administrative and military ranks in the north-western provinces and selling the patents to them for large sums of money. Similar things were practised in Guizhou and other south-eastern provinces in 1870 where the authorities needed additional revenue to put down the Miao. Nor did the Beijing government let provincial administrators outdo it. Russian Sinologist M.I. Veniukov, who visited the country at the time, attests that the throne 'had no hope of successfully introducing new taxes, and kept creating new, redundant offices, in order to obtain fresh funds by selling them'.¹⁸

Manchu feudal lords and officials, however, were only marginally affected by the hardships of the wars and punitive expeditions. 'Though the number of Manchus has decreased,' Veniukov wrote, 'the situation of the surviving ones has not grown any the worse and Beijing is still the camp of conquerors it was in the 17th century. Only the conquerors have forfeited all their valour and acquired all the vices of the conquered.'¹⁹ To be sure, the acute social crisis that

gripped the country in the 1850s and 60s greatly affected the rank and file bannermen. Its coffers empty, the Dragon Throne could no longer maintain all Manchus on treasury funds. In 1865 an edict was issued abolishing the strict attachment of Manchus to garrisons, permitting them to settle freely in any part of the empire and engage in productive activity under the jurisdiction of local (i.e. Chinese) authorities. This spoke of an enfeeblement of Manchu rule and of the rise of a local Chinese feudal military bureaucracy.

Economic and Ideological 'Self-Strengthening'

The most urgent task facing the Qing after the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion was to make good the colossal damage the economy had sustained in the civil war. Demolished irrigation works had to be repaired. Refugees had to be brought back to the pacified provinces. The abandoned land had to be put under the plough. Li Hongzhang, who toured Jiangsu after the Taipings had been routed, memorialised the emperor:

'Everything has been laid waste, the roads are overgrown with bushes, you go for dozens of *li* and see no human habitation, and it happens that you go for 30 *li* and meet not a living soul. Only ruins everywhere. One or two homeless children, a widow or adolescent is all that remains from every hundred people, but even the survivors have lost the appearance of human beings.'²⁰

No less dramatic is the evidence of a foreign witness, who wrote that the Taiping Rebellion 'altered the face of the country, destroyed communications, changed the course of rivers, demolished dykes and dams along the coast. During the rebellion thriving fields were reduced to eerie desert, and fortified towns into heaps of rubble. The valleys of Jiangnan, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang are littered with human skeletons, the rivers are polluted with floating corpses. Wild beasts have come down in large numbers from their mountain lairs and stalk about in the fields, making their dens in the ruins of the deserted towns. The shrieks of pheasants have replaced the former human noise and bustle; no hands are left to work the land, and poison weeds cover the fields that were once so diligently tilled.'²¹

Recovery of farming was necessitated by the question of food supplies, on the one hand, and by the court's wish to have a reliable rear for its armies to preclude any more outbreaks of rebellion, on the other. The first thing the government did was to return all land and property to Manchu and Chinese landlords, officials, and *shenshi*. All attention was concentrated on renewing land cultivation: while former owners of the land were helped to return, waste land was distributed free (or in return for just 30 per cent of the crop) to

tenants. Irrigation works were gradually put into working order. The land tax was lowered. Still, the full burden of reviving agriculture lay on tenant farmers.

The oppressive restrictions imposed on merchants during the civil war were not relaxed. The *lijin* (octroi) tax, first introduced in Yangzhou in 1853 and extended to the rest of Jiangsu province in 1854, and to the rest of China in 1857, was not lifted. After the civil war had ended, too, goods carted from one point to another were taxed at countless road posts, leading to a further decline of trade with disastrous effects for the merchants. The only merchandise for which no octroi was exacted was that brought from abroad under the terms of the unequal treaties.

In 1859, the customs offices (established in 1854) in Shanghai and other treaty ports were put into the charge of an Inspector-General of Imperial Maritime Customs, of which the real masters were Britons. G.T. Lay, a young Englishman who had headed the Shanghai customs in 1855, was appointed Inspector-General. In 1861, he was succeeded by another Englishman born in Northern Ireland, Robert Hart, initially a member of the British consular service, who remained in charge of the Chinese customs during the following forty odd years.

The Imperial Maritime Customs, with head offices in Beijing, worked in close contact with the Zongli yamen and was, like the diplomatic corps, a channel of continuous Western influence (especially that of Britain). In 1860, it set about collecting funds for indemnities payable to Britain and France (8 million *liang* of silver each), the job being completed in 1863. From 1868 to 1894 the Qing repeatedly obtained loans from foreign (mainly British) banks to cover unforeseen expenditures, and this also through Hart's good services, with customs revenue serving as security. The example of the central government was followed by provincial authorities, often without the sanction of Beijing. They obtained loans against local customs revenue through local foreign customs commissioners. Later, the customs also financed Chinese diplomatic missions abroad and the training of Chinese diplomatic personnel and translators, and maintained navigation, pilot, lighthouse, postal, and quarantine services. Frequently, the customs service was also deputed to collect local taxes, publish statistics, and arrange for the translation of foreign books.

Chinese merchants and owners of junks and boats who accounted for the bulk of the movement of cargoes were irked by the institution of a centralised foreign-run customs service. They saw it, and rightly, as a means of new fiscal pressure and one more concession to the West, whose commercial penetration was undermining traditional Chinese crafts, Chinese trade, and Chinese transport. All the

same, the government's revenue from cargo carriage increased. The Manchus were glad to put foreigners in command of the customs, because they were unsure of the loyalty of native officials in view of mounting separatist sentiment among Chinese provincial authorities. Besides, true to the classic rule of Chinese diplomacy, 'use barbarians to control barbarians', the Qing government was happy to let foreign officials handle conflicts with foreign merchants over customs duties, and to look on from the sidelines.

Chinese customs employees were carefully selected by foreign administrators, usually from among those who had finished the new 'modern text' educational establishments or missionary schools or from among compradores who had proved themselves during their years of association with foreign firms. In 1876, the customs had 1,263 Chinese employees, and as many as 3,471 by 1895.

China's foreign trade grew steeply after the opium wars. The suppression of the Taiping Rebellion made for rapid penetration of foreign capital into the rich Yangzi valley and various port cities. In the twelve months from 1 July 1867 to 30 June 1868 the treaty ports were visited by as many as 6,887 foreign ships, out of which 3,861 or more than half were British, 1,511 were U.S., 1,042 Prussian, 123 Dutch, 113 Spanish, 13 Russian, and 2 Japanese. Tsarist Russia's trade with China, in contrast to British, French, and American, was chiefly overland, not maritime. Besides, Russia had no hand in the opium trade, did not export coolies, and had no missionaries to promote its trade.

The gold rush in California and Australia, the expansion of plantations in the West Indies and Cuba, and the swift growth of the guano (saltpetre) industry in Peru and Chile, pushed up the demand for cheap labour. The late forties of the 19th century saw large numbers of unskilled Chinese labourers (coolies), who were recruited by deceit and subterfuge, often by force, herded into the holds of foreign ships in South China ports and shipped across the ocean. There they were turned over to the tender mercies of planters and mine owners. The conditions on the coolie-carrying ships were appallingly unsanitary, with mortality on British ships as high as 40 per cent.

The Beijing treaties of 1860 contained provisions regulating the coolie trade. In 1866, the Qing signed a special agreement with Britain and France laying down the procedure for contracting Chinese labourers. The abuses of recruiting rivalled the frighteningly brutal treatment of coolies at the destination points. English historian Stanley Wright reports that in the early 1870s dozens of British, French, Italian, Belgian, Spanish, and Peruvian ships set sail from Macao with holds crowded with human beings, each of whom could tell a story of woe and violence, and many of suicide.²²

In 1872, one of the more than 300 coolies on the Peruvian ship *Maria Luz* managed to escape during the vessel's stop-over in Yokohama, and lodged a complaint with the Japanese authorities of the unbearable conditions to which the unwilling passengers were being subjected. The ship's captain was committed to a public trial, whereupon the coolies were released and returned to China.

In 1874 the Qing government sent a mission to Cuba to investigate the condition of coolies there, and its report, published in Shanghai two years later, showed that eight out of every ten questioned coolies had been either kidnapped or wilfully deceived, that mortality from beatings, suicides, and diseases aboard the coolie ships was in excess of 10 per cent, and that on arriving in Havana the Chinese were sold into slavery to sugar cane planters. The labour on the plantations was backbreaking, and the food they were given insufficient. The working day had no limit, while the punishment inflicted with lashes, whips, chains, and rods caused wholesale maiming. Many coolies had been beaten to death or driven to suicide. When contracts ran out, planters forced coolies to renew them. But despite this ghastly evidence, the Qing government took no effective steps to curb the slave trade or to afford its subjects abroad any protection.

In addition to the establishment of the Zongli yamen, the memorial of Grand Duke Gong, Gui Liang, and Wen Xiang, approved by the emperor on 13 January 1861, provided for the institution in Beijing of a foreign language school (*Tongwenguan*) to train loyal officials for the maintenance of relations with the Western world. Eligible to study there were all persons of the eight banners (that is, all Manchus, and Mongols and Chinese whose ancestors had helped the Manchus to conquer China). Students were taught English, French, and Russian by foreign instructors. On 11 March 1863, Li Hongzhang submitted another memorial, suggesting that foreign language schools modelled on the *Tongwenguan* should be opened in Shanghai and Guangzhou. (The text of the memorial was composed by Feng Guifen.) The emperor approved. On 25 June 1866, Zuo Zongtang requested the court's permission to start a shipyard in Fuzhou and to open a school there to teach shipbuilding and navigation. Zuo's memorial, too, gained the emperor's approval. In December 1866 and January 1867, members of the Zongli yamen submitted several memorials proposing to add a department of astronomy and mathematics to the school in Beijing. This encountered violent opposition from ultra-conservatives. Headed by Wo Ren, tutor of the young emperor, they held that neither astronomy nor mathematics was a science in the Confucian sense, that it was no more than a crude trade unworthy of true Confucian scholars. Wo Ren also objected to engaging foreign teachers, whom he held to be enemies of China. In the long run, the new department was opened, but its students received none of the privileges

the Zongli yamen had asked for, and its graduates had no hope of getting any lucrative posts in the administration.

The next step of the advocates of 'self-strengthening' was to despatch several groups of boys and youths, altogether 120, to the United States to attend American secondary and virtually also higher schools. But in 1881 the students were abruptly recalled for fear that they would come under the influence of a foreign culture and begin to doubt the superiority to all others of Chinese culture. On returning from the United States, nearly all the students were put to work in enterprises and offices controlled by the regional groups of Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang.

In 1877, a number of graduates of the Fuzhou shipbuilding and navigation school were sent for three years' studies abroad. But the proposal (in Li Hongzhang's memorial of 12 December 1874) that each port city should have a modern school dispensing Western knowledge, teaching physics, chemistry, mapmaking, engineering, navigation, electrical engineering, warcraft, and fortifications, and that these subjects should be included in the civil service examinations, was turned down. All the same, to serve the needs of his military-bureaucratic clique, Li opened a technical school in Tianjin in 1879, a telegraphy school in 1880, a naval college in 1881, and a military college in 1885. Technical schools were also opened in Dagu (1881), Dalian (Dairen, 1887), and Weihaiwei (1894), and a school of Western science in Guangzhou (1880). These and similar establishments, which sprang up in China in the 1860s to 90s, trained personnel for administrative offices and for enterprises set up under the 'self-strengthening' policy—translators and interpreters, people versed in foreign affairs and foreign trade, shipbuilders, navigators, seamen, officers, telegraphers, mechanics, mining engineers, and medical personnel for the army and navy. Alongside modern Western science the schools taught Confucian philosophy. Students were obliged to learn the Sacred Edict of Emperor Kangxi and the Confucian Canon of Filial Piety, and to write eight-legged essays to 'moderate their character'. Graduates did not always get jobs they were trained for and, besides, their graduation certificates were not equated to even the title of county or prefectural licentiate (graduate of local civil service examinations), and did not make them eligible to official positions. As a rule, this kept away the more gifted and able youths. The *shenshi* were traditionally prejudiced against any 'novelty', and this included the 'modern text' schools. The social background of their students became increasingly 'common' as the schools grew more numerous, and this despite the Qing government's original intention of limiting admission to members of the loyal Manchu military caste. To the new schools flocked the children of merchants and prosperous artisans, leading to the emergence of a technically

educated social stratum, and to the spread in China of scientific and, to a lesser degree, political doctrines of the bourgeois West. The very best students at Tongwenguan, for example, belonged without exception to the eightbanner caste, whereas by 1879 twenty per cent were children of Chinese outside that privileged group, 40 per cent by 1888, and 54 per cent by 1893.²³

The Chinese translations of contemporary foreign books were purely utilitarian, meeting the needs of 'self-strengthening' and nothing more—books on international law by Henry Wheaton, George de Martens, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, and Kaspar Bluntschli, and on Western constitutional law (including the Code Napoléon), world history, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, physics, engineering, mining, and so on. The Translation Bureau of Shanghai's Jiangnan Arsenal was highly active. Despite the purely official nature of the translated foreign literature, it did help to acquaint China with the bourgeois culture of the West, and stimulated the spread of bourgeois social and political ideas. The translators, like the teachers, were chiefly foreign missionaries (the Americans W.A.P. Martin and Young J. Allen, and the Englishmen John Fryer and Alexander Wylie), foreign employees of the Imperial Maritime Customs and people from Western diplomatic missions. The foreign powers sought to influence young Chinese intellectuals ideologically, and to win them as conductors of Western interests. This purpose was served by the many Protestant and Catholic missionary schools and colleges that were opened in Shanghai, Dengzhou (Shandong province), Beijing, Tongzhou (near Beijing), and Nanjing in the 1880s.

At the same time, ideologues and advocates of 'self-strengthening' felt obliged to safeguard the traditional feudal system of education (in public and private schools), to alter practically nothing in that system, and to train young men for civil service examinations that gave members of all estates formal access to the bureaucratic hierarchy. In the last several decades of the 19th century the official examinations were of three classes: county and prefectural, held twice every three years under the directorship of the chief of the provincial education department (one or two per cent of the candidates passed and were granted the first academic degree, *xiucai* or *shengyuan*); provincial, held on average once in three years (one or two per cent of the candidates passed and were granted the degree of *juren*); metropolitan, held once in three years in Beijing, with 250 to 325 candidates gaining the highest degree, that of *jinsi*. By regulating the frequency of local examinations and setting provincial quotas for candidates to metropolitan examinations to suit the political situation in the empire and depending on the tax revenue brought in by local landlords, the Qing turned the civil service examinations into a powerful instrument of control over Chinese land-

lords, officials, and *shenshi*, stirring up rivalry and unity between the Chinese gentry of different provinces.

The examination candidates had to write two essays—one on a topic from the *Four Books* (12th-century neo-Confucian commentaries) and the other on a topic from the five Confucian classics (works traditionally ascribed to Confucius, who he lived in the 5th century B.C.)—and to pass an oral examination at which they were engaged in a conversation, usually of a linguistic nature. For many centuries, the civil service examinations (first introduced in the 6th century) were the same, wholly circumscribed by the tenets of the official Confucian ideology, and not requiring the candidates to generate any new ideas. Candidates preparing for examinations memorised a vast number of ancient and medieval Confucian texts and commentaries, learned to write the archaic eight-legged essays, and practised the devices of formal calligraphy. Bigotry and stagnant scholasticism reigned supreme.

While tolerating the training of modern technicians for the war industry and of bureaucrats for the conduct of foreign affairs in the framework of 'self-strengthening', the Qing watched jealously that this should in no way influence the recruitment of officials. Proposals for insignificant and purely superficial reforms of the examination system, amounting essentially to modern scientific subjects being added to the examinations, were howled down by the conservative majority. Even on the eve of the war with Japan, in 1893, the more than 18,000 candidates from Jiangsu and Anhui provinces sitting for the *juren* degree in Nanjing were offered to elaborate on irrelevant quotations from the ancient Confucian classics, and competed in singing the praises of Confucius and the Qing emperors. No knowledge of any exact science was required of them.

Advocates of 'self-strengthening' invoked thought-control methods to keep down the population. In pacified areas, when still fighting to suppress the Taipings, they revived the archaic *baojia* mutual responsibility system. In the 1860s, governor of Jiangsu province Ding Richang, a close associate of Li Hongzhang, ordered the county authorities to enforce *baojia* in territories under their jurisdiction, and similar orders were issued in the 1880s by Bian Baodi, governor of Hunan, who relied on the *shenshi* gentry of Changsha and Shanhua to enforce the system.²⁴

To combat the activity of secret societies and tighten their ideological grip on the people, the 'self-strengtheners' also enforced the traditional *xiangyue* (community talks), held twice monthly under *shenshi* supervision in all parts of the empire. Specially appointed 'talkers' (*xiangyue*) propagated the sayings of Manchu emperors, extolled the wisdom of the Qing dynasty, and kept a record of the good and evil deeds of people in the district (that is, were simultane-

ously governors, not spies). In 1868, Ding Richang directed the county chiefs of his province to send in periodical reports on the 'talks', and ordered officials of local education departments to supervise them. The 'talkers' were instructed to hold their gatherings every five days rather than fortnightly.²⁵

In the hands of 'self-strengtheners' Confucianism was an instrument of ideological control over the peasantry. Furthermore, it built a reliable bridge between the Manchu rulers and the class of Chinese feudalists. The fame of the Tongcheng school (a Confucian academy in Tongcheng, northern Anhui, whose graduates showed the best results in civil service examinations) was widespread in the latter half of the 19th century. Its instructors required blind imitation of the doctrines of Song dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi, tolerated no freedom in interpreting Confucian dogma, and preached strict observance of feudal rules of behaviour. They stood up for the archaic rule of writing eight-legged essays in the dead *guwen* language, declared social relations to be immutable, and tolerated no deviations from the strictly established rules of people's behaviour—*li*—hallowed by Confucian tradition. Any breach of *li*, they held, was rank mutiny and subject to corporal punishment. As we see neo-Confucian philosophy was invoked to justify the brutal punitive policies of the Manchu-Chinese feudalists.

Confucian literature was disseminated widely in areas recaptured by government troops. A strict ban was declared on the printing of any but Confucian books. Literature for entertainment, folk romances, and satirical works were outlawed. Ding Richang banned more than a hundred works of fiction and classical drama in his province, whose allegorical style he saw as an incitement to mutiny or as contrary to Confucian ethics. Thrift was preached assiduously, while any aspiration to wealth and well-being was censured. In the setting of economic dislocation, the propagation of extreme thrift pursued the utilitarian aim of speeding up economic rehabilitation. But vast sums were being granted in the meantime for the restoration of Confucian schools and temples damaged or demolished in the civil war.²⁶

One of Zuo Zongtang's favourite aphorisms, 'good people are more precious than good weapons', was evidence of his devotion to Confucian philosophy, which made blind obedience of inferior to superior the ultimate goal of moral self-improvement.

Outbreak of Anti-Missionary Sentiment and the Tianjin Events of 1870

The results of the Second Opium War gave foreign missionaries a peculiarly favourable advantage. When the First Opium War began

there were 57 Protestant missionaries in the country and 17 Protestant missions with nearly 200 missionaries were active by 1860, whereas before 1867, as many as 48 new Protestant missions were opened. The Catholic Church was still more active, with 233 missionaries by 1866. When building churches in Chinese villages, foreign missionaries resorted to all sorts of unlawful practices, seizing private and crown lands, public buildings, and temples. The local people were incensed. Chinese converts were relatively few: people refused to give up their traditional beliefs and rites. In the drive for numbers, missionaries agreed to baptise adventurers, rogues, criminals, and *déclassé* elements. They protected converts in courts of law, and, taking advantage of their protection, parishioners declined to pay taxes, settled scores with neighbours, disobeyed local officials, and scorned the tenets of official Confucianism.

The first massive anti-missionary incidents occurred in 1862 in Jiangxi and Hunan provinces. The higher authorities were gravely disturbed. During the anti-missionary turmoil in Nanchang, the governor of Jiangxi, Shen Baozhen, noted in his memorial: 'I have learned what they talk about in the city. Everybody is saying that officials curry favour with foreigners and suppress the common people. The people are indignant, and I fear that they will riot again.'²⁷ In 1864, foreign diplomats, too, sent despatches to their governments of the widespread hostility towards foreigners among all sections of the population, notably the *shenshi*.

In the autumn of 1868 there were anti-missionary disturbances in Yangzhou incited by local *shenshi*. British gunboats intervened and captured the sole Chinese steam warship there. This made Liangjiang viceroy Zeng Guofan comply with Britain's demands. He agreed to compensate losses inflicted on the missionaries and to punish the mutineers.

In 1868-1869, during disturbances in the Yangzi valley, at Jiujiang, Yangzhou, and Qingjiang, Chinese crowds ransacked the buildings of Protestant and Catholic missions. There was also unrest in Taiwan, near Tainan, incited by foreign violations of the state camphor monopoly.

In 1869, serious incidents occurred in Sichuan, Fujian, Zhili, Guizhou, and Anhui provinces. Here, the *shenshi* scholar gentry joined urban workers and villagers, for the spread of Christianity was jeopardising their ideological grip on the population and undermining the pillars of Confucianism. Many *shenshi* were moved by patriotic sentiment, seeking to protect the Chinese cultural heritage. In sum, the anti-missionary feeling was generated less by religious reasons and much more by the rising sense of outrage at the aggressions visited on the Chinese by capitalist powers.

The most serious anti-missionary incident of this period occurred

in June-July 1870 in Tianjin. Townspeople had long nursed their resentment of the unruly behaviour of French troops that had been quartered in the city in 1860-1863. In the summer of 1869, French missionaries laid the foundation stone of a Catholic church on the site of a demolished Chinese temple. This added fuel to the fire. The immediate cause of the incident, however, was the provocative conduct of the French consul, Fontanier. Visiting the office of the northern imperial superintendent of trade, Chong Hou, on 21 June 1870, he drew his sabre and began smashing the furniture and glassware, and finally opened fire from his pistol. The townspeople, long since made restless by rumours that Roman Catholic nuns were hiring people to kidnap Chinese children in order to use their eyes and hearts to prepare medicines, attacked and killed the frenzied consul, set fire to the French consulate, the Catholic cathedral, an orphanage, and the premises of the Catholic mission, and also the buildings of the British and American missions, killing 17 French missionaries and dozens of Chinese converts. Several tens of thousands of Tianjin inhabitants took part in the incident. The Chinese troops in Tianjin, though they did not become involved in the anti-foreign action, were inclined to sympathise with the townspeople.

Trade superintendent Chong Hou complained in his memorial to the emperor that the men of the Tianjin garrison were undependable, and requested that they should be replaced. He also accused local officials and *shenshi* of taking part in the anti-foreign rioting, and did not conceal his joy over the arrival in Tianjin of foreign warships. Zeng Guofan, viceroy of Zhili, who was appointed by the throne to investigate the incident, and his successor Li Hongzhang, meted out harsh punishment to anti-French rioters. Zeng Guofan admitted that the French had behaved provocatively, but maintained that the 'only way is to do what we can to settle the Tianjin incident, even if it hurts our prestige'.²⁸ Giving way to French pressure, the Manchu-Chinese authorities executed 15 civilians from among the urban poor, and subjected 21 to a variety of punishments. The French demand that the chiefs of the municipal and county administrations and the commander of the provincial troops should also be executed was ignored (with the former two being exiled to Heilongjiang province, while the latter was dismissed from his post). The Qing government paid France a sizeable indemnity and sent a special mission headed by Chong Hou to Paris to apologise.

The conduct of Zeng Guofan, who had taken fright when the French threatened war and had accepted China's guilt for the Tianjin events, roused patriotic fury throughout the country. In Tianjin, the Shuitianhui secret society circulated pamphlets denouncing the defeatist attitude of Chong Hou and Zeng Guofan, while the Hunan natives association in Beijing struck Zeng Guofan's name off its roll

of honoured Hunan personalities.

Anti-foreign disturbances occurred in many Chinese towns when word of the Tianjin events reached there. For a time missionary activity declined. In early 1871, perturbed by the Tientsin riots and the reaction to them, the Qing sent Western diplomats in Beijing a memorandum on Christian missions. In it the government admitted that it was incapable of coping with the situation and begged the powers to keep missionary activity within limits that did not damage Qing prestige. But the recipients of the plea refused to discuss the matter, while insisting that foreign missionaries in China should be properly protected.

Under pressure of the British minister to China, Grand Duke Gong, head of the Zongli yamen, in a memorial to Emperor Tongzhi in February 1872, censured local authorities for failing to stop anti-foreign riots in the provinces, and for showing contempt and hostility to foreigners. The Grand Duke suggested that officials and inhabitants alike should be brought round to respecting foreigners and that an edict should be issued that 'those guilty of breaking the rules of politeness or of insulting behaviour against foreigners shall be strictly punished'.²⁹ The emperor unhesitatingly endorsed the memorial, and on 22 February 1872 it was published in *Jingbao*, the official metropolitan gazette. (It will be interesting to note, however, that in copies of the memorial sent to the provinces the characters for Britain were placed lower than those for the Qing Empire, which by Chinese custom created the impression of the former's subordinate place to China.)

The Rise of Regional Landlord Cliques

Frightened out of its wits by the Tianjin events and expecting serious reprisals when a French fleet steamed into the Gulf of Zhili, the Manchu court had urgently ordered Li Hongzhang, who was then priming for a march to Shenxi to subdue the Dungan rising, to deploy crack units of his Anhui army to the metropolitan province. But the anticipated French action did not materialise, for in view of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, the French government was pleased to agree to a peaceful settlement of the incident. So, Beijing felt, the Anhui army had no more business in Zhili and should be withdrawn. At this time, the viceroy of Zhili, Zeng Guofan, pleading old age and illness, prevailed on Cixi to appoint Li Hongzhang in his place. The appointment of Li, who was known for his loyalty to the Qing and his friendly, co-operative attitude towards the French, British, and Americans in Shanghai and Jiangsu, was to reassure the powers of Qing fidelity to its policy of close collaboration

with foreigners, and this also against the common enemy, the people of China.

As viceroy of Zhili, Li defied the repeated instructions of the court and retained the large Anhui army in the metropolitan province on the pretext of deterring foreign invasion. He also kept his grip on the arsenals in Shanghai, Suzhou, and Nanjing, and on such sources of revenue as the salterns of Lianghuai and the customs office in Shanghai, which he needed to maintain his army. Besides, his protégés hung on to all key posts in the East China provinces he had governed before. Thus, for the next quarter of a century Li became the central political figure in North China, amassing more and more posts in Zhili province and the central imperial administration.

Soon after his appointment, taking advantage of Chong Hou's being away on his mission to France, Li Hongzhang got himself the post of imperial superintendent of trade in northern ports, with his residence in Tianjin. This enabled him to transfer there his headquarters from Baoding. It did not take him long to gain a hold on the Tianjin customs, to take all matters related to the defence of North China into his own hands, and to put himself in control of the Tianjin Arsenal. He also established routine contacts with foreign consular and diplomatic officials, and quickly took over most of the external affairs previously handled by the Zongli yamen. Being a member of that body, he exercised a decisive influence on the foreign policy of the Qing Empire. In fact, in 1883 a British diplomat reported wily to the Foreign Office that the Zongli yamen was little more than a branch of the Tianjin yamen of Li Hongzhang, member of the Imperial Secretariat.³⁰ In 1877, the Anhui army directly under Li's command numbered nearly 40,000 (not counting auxiliary troops).

Li stationed his troops at all strategically important points of the metropolitan province, whereupon he set about to replace the commanders of other military units in the province with his own men, and established close contacts with foreign instructors drilling the troops. In effect, all armed forces in Zhili province, with the exception of the Manchu eight banners, became his personal army.

Colonel Y.A. Sosnovsky of the Russian General Staff, who toured North, Central and North-West China in 1874-1875, in a description of the state of the Chinese armed forces commended the organisation, training, and armaments of the troops under Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang, while noting the backwardness of the eight banners and the Chinese provincial greenbanner troops armed with bows and arrows, lances, and ancient flintlocks. The latter, he observed, were at best good for guard duty. The Military Office in Beijing was only nominally in charge of the imperial armed forces. The

best troops in the country were those of Chinese feudal military cliques, quartered in localities that suited their plans. 'The Chinese soldier,' Sosnovsky wrote, 'tills the land, sweeps the yard, feeds the hogs, and, in short, does all the duties of the serf to his master. The master, who extracts tremendous profits from the monies allotted for every soldier ... also obtains a sizeable income ... from the soldier's sideline employment.'³¹

Zeng Guofan, leader of the strongest of all Chinese regional landlord cliques of the 1860s—the Hunan clique—had in his time nourished plans of a wider involvement of the Chinese scholar gentry in running the country, and saw 'self-strengthening' as the means to this end. In 1862, he said to his circle of subordinates: 'If we want to find the tools for strengthening ourselves, we should begin with the most urgent task—study ways of reforming the civil service and enlisting the most able people for it, and thereupon consider the cardinally important matter of manufacturing shells, steamships, and other machines.'³²

But the Chinese feudalists did not succeed in carrying all their plans into practice after the Taiping Rebellion was put down. The Manchus, who had managed to hang on to power with foreign support, did make certain concessions to the Chinese military-bureaucratic groups, but did not abdicate their hold on the country.

In July 1869, Biutsov, the Russian chargé d'affaires in Beijing, reported to St Petersburg about the growing power of provincial viceroys and governors. 'In many respects,' he wrote, 'the Beijing government has no more than nominal power in regions of China, each of which is all but a separate state whose ruler is vested with next to unlimited powers and frequently ignores the instructions he receives from Beijing.'³³

The Qing government endeavoured to prevent Li Hongzhang's group from growing any stronger, and gave its support to the leader of another regional group, Zuo Zongtang, who was trying to seize control of the Shanghai Jiangnan and Nanjing arsenals that were still, as before, within Li Hongzhang's sphere of influence. The Qing also encouraged the expansion of the Fuzhou shipyard and arsenal, seeing Zuo as a force counterweighing the swiftly rising influence of Li Hongzhang.

The country's division into regional landlord domains weakened the Qing Empire in face of the threat of Western aggression. The foreign powers established direct political and economic ties with the various Chinese feudal military-bureaucratic cliques, circumventing the central government. This gradual disintegration of the Qing Empire into large administrative areas under full political, military, and economic control of regional Chinese groups of landlords and generals, which had begun in the 1870s, left a distinct mark on all

subsequent Chinese history. The system of Chinese warlordism with its many cliques scrimmaging for spheres of influence, which in effect replaced the Qing monarchy in 1912, was established by Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, Zuo Zongtang, Zhang Zhidong, and other leaders of regional groups associated with the 'self-strengthening' policy, and was maintained by their closest associates long after their lifetime in the early decades of the 20th century (Sheng Xuanhuai, Yuan Shikai, Duan Qirui, and others). The arsenals that Li Hongzhang had founded in Shanghai, Tianjin, and Manchuria were still the chief suppliers of the Chinese armed forces when the 19th century ran on into the 20th.

The 1870s and 1880s saw the two chief Chinese warlord groups thrust into trade and industry—the Anhui group led by Li Hongzhang, and the Hunan group headed after its founder Zeng Guofan's death by his brother Zeng Guoquan, Zuo Zongtang, Zeng Jize (Zeng Guofan's eldest son), and others. This entrepreneurship was prompted by selfish localist interests and certainly not by any patriotic concern for the greatness of the Qing Empire. Most of all, each group sought to supply its armed forces with modern weapons and equipment, and effective high-speed vehicles, in order to extend the territory under its political, military, financial, and economic sway.

When putting down peasant rebellions and the insurrections of non-Han peoples, the leaders of the Chinese landlord armies made fortunes out of the plunder they visited on the population, out of military booty, and by embezzlement. They levied taxes to their heart's content, with especially disastrous effects for domestic trade.

The regional armies were maintained chiefly on taxes collected from traders and manufacturers, for as a rule the agricultural tax went to the imperial coffers for the maintenance of the metropolitan civil service and the bureaucratic elite.

To marshal funds for the establishment of industrial enterprises, coalmines, railways, shipping companies, and so on, the leaders of regional cliques invited the Chinese merchants and landlords to contribute capital. This was done through special mixed industrial and trading companies under the control of government and regional officials, to which private persons, too, were formally admitted, provided they made their capital available (on the principle of *guan du shang ban*, meaning 'government supervision and merchant operation'). Involving extensive use of private capital alongside funds from the treasury, this system led to excessive enrichment of the leaders of the military cliques and the army of civil servants, and was a drain on private fortunes. Though enterprises, mines and modern communication lines were established as a result, the government supervision and merchant operation enterprises held down the development of Chinese national industry, which could not compete against their

monopoly rights and various other privileges granted by the Dragon Throne.

The arsenals and shipyards founded by the Chinese regional cliques in the 1860s expanded and increased production. To consolidate the influence of his group, Zuo Zongtang proposed in a memorial to the throne of 25 June 1866 that the Fuzhou shipyards should be commissioned to build the entire Chinese navy, sweeping aside the objections of extreme conservatives who thought imitation of Western shipbuilding was demeaning. In the first seven years (by 1874), the shipyards, supervised by French technicians, built 15 steamships, with ten of more than 1,000 tonnes, and with their total tonnage running to 16,000, armed with 75 guns and manned by a crew of 1,500. The yards had their own modern arsenal, an iron works, rolling mill, and steam engine factory. They employed 2,550 Chinese workers and 75 foreign technicians, chiefly French. From 1874 on, however, ships were built with practically no foreign technical assistance.

The Jiangnan Arsenal, controlled by the Li Hongzhang clique, built few ships—just six small vessels and two steamships of 2,800 tonnes displacement each in 1868-1876, and one more steamer in 1885—and was mainly engaged in making firearms and gunpowder. Throughout this period it employed foreign technicians.

In the industrial enterprises of the 'self-strengthening' advocates workers were callously mistreated and exploited without mercy. Russian traveller P.I. Piasetsky, a physician, who visited the Shanghai Arsenal in 1874, wrote: 'The workers of the arsenal do their jobs in excellent style, diligently and skilfully, producing precise copies of European models; but their haggard faces, sunken eyes, hollowed cheeks, and spent bodies, evidently from the effects of backbreaking toil, adverse circumstances, and poor food, excite compassion.'³⁴

Towards the close of 1872, Li Hongzhang founded the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, using both treasury funds and private Chinese capital. In 1877, the Company, which initially had two steamers, bought 18 more steamships from Russell and Co., an American shipping line that had been operating in China waters since 1862. By 1880, the China Merchants increased its fleet of ships to 29, raising total tonnage to 20,747.

Li used treasury funds to build telegraph lines, and to ensure supplies of coal for the shipping line he established the Kailan Mining Administration (in 1878). To carry the coal from the mine to the nearest seaport he also suggested laying a railway from Tangshan to Beitang. At first, the emperor gave his consent, but soon withdrew it owing to the wiles of Li's rivals of the Hunan clique. The seven-mile track already laid from Tangshan to a canal that led to the Beitang river was used all the same, with the coal transported in

mule-drawn freight cars. In 1881, the mules were replaced by the first Chinese-built locomotive, and in 1886 the track was continued to Lutai. In March of the following year, Li finally succeeded in obtaining the consent of the court to extend the railway north to Shanhaiguan and south-west to Tianjin, and on to Beijing (on the pretext that the railway was needed for rapid movement of troops and military freight). The Tangshan-Shanhaiguan section of the line was completed in 1894.

To obtain treasury funds for his railway project, Li set up the North China Railways Administration, and through Robert Hart, Inspector-General of the Chinese Maritime Customs, managed also to obtain British capital.

Private entrepreneurs, and shareholders of mixed state-private enterprises had no remedy against the abuses and 'squeeze' of the officials: they had no choice but to accept the 'protection' of the influential local warlord clique, buy official posts, and thus participate in sapping the foundations of private enterprise by feudal bureaucratic methods. Even the wealthiest members of the young national bourgeoisie like Zhang Jian were compelled to seek the good graces of viceroys and provincial governors and put their capital into mixed enterprises, surrendering control over them to the regional cliques instead of launching out on their own. Li Hongzhang made no secret of his designs to shift the financial burden in mixed companies to holders of large private fortunes. In a memorial to the throne seeking permission to launch the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, he wrote: 'We are not sure if matters will go well or badly. Even if matters go badly, the only ones to suffer from it will be the merchants, the holders of the shares.'³⁵

Leaders of regional cliques and metropolitan dignitaries who had their finger in the industrial pie, were closely associated with the leading compradores, the proxies of foreign firms and foreign powers. To this social group, indeed, Li Hongzhang and other leaders turned to recruit administrators for their commercial and industrial enterprises. In fact, their ties with the compradores were reciprocal: they became shareholders in comprador enterprises, and thereby gained an interest in foreign firms. Machines, equipment, raw materials, arms, warships and steamers for projects in China were purchased abroad through Chinese compradores, who milked the Qing treasury and the young national bourgeoisie.

Among the directors and managers of 'government supervision and merchant operation' enterprises of the Li Hongzhang clique in Shanghai was Zheng Guanying, former comprador of the two oldest British firms in China, Dent and Co. and Butterfield and Swire. Tang Tingshu (Tong Kingxing), former comprador of Jardine, Matheson and Co., was the first manager of the China Merchants

Steam Navigation Company.

Leaders of regional cliques showed little or no concern for the country's interests. Li Hongzhang had no regard at all for the rules of the customs service, used ships of the China Merchants Company for duty-free movement of his privately-owned cargoes, notably for smuggling opium grown on his own plantations, and for transporting rice from his hereditary estates in the Wuhu area to North China. Still less was he concerned with the interests of the shipping company's shareholders, members of the Chinese national bourgeoisie. He used company funds at will, and among other things, as in 1881, for buying warships. The China Merchants fleet was employed again and again to transport Anhui army and other military units, and was never paid for it.

The entrepreneurship of the two major Chinese regional cliques precipitated bitter rivalries. In the late 1880s, for example, Li Hongzhang's plans for extending the Tangshan-Tianjin railway to Tongzhou near Beijing in one direction and to Shanhaiguan on the South Manchurian border in the other, encountered frantic resistance from Zhang Zhidong. The latter urged the throne to reassign the allocated 2 million *liang* to the construction of a railway from Lugouqiao (near Beijing) to Hankou, which would have favoured the military and economic interests of the Hunan clique.

For obvious reasons, Li disguised his private industrial activity and profit lust with demagogical talk about China's national interests. In the 1880s, he appealed to various European and U.S. charities to secure a ban on opium in their countries and to support 'China's efforts to extricate itself from the opium bondage'. The aim was simple: he was raising opium poppy on his estates in Anhui, and had a stake in eliminating foreign competition. Many of Li's other public pronouncements were similarly demagogical. In his memorials to the emperor and the Zongli yamen he referred to foreign threats to the country only to promote undertakings that spelled profit to himself. On 29 June 1872, for example, in a special memorial to the court, he asked for monopoly rights to be granted to companies launched by merchants under government supervision (ostensibly to protect China from the economic despotism of foreign powers). As a result, the China Merchants shipping line, which he controlled, was granted a monopoly for carrying rice to the North.

In a memorial submitted to the emperor in 1881 concerning the Kailan coalmines, Li wrote: 'When we signed the first treaties we were deceived by the foreigners, and as a result a light tax is imposed on imported goods, whereas heavy duties are collected from goods that we export. The lamentable outcome is that our taxes inflict losses on Chinese merchants and protect foreigners.'³⁶ In the concluding passage Li begged that exported Kailan coal should pay a

duty 'of only one-tenth of a *liang* per tonne ... in order that Chinese merchants have an advantage over foreign coal producers'.³⁷ And in an 1882 memorial, Li asked for the court's consent to starting a modern textile mill in Shanghai, wherein he extolled the advantages of having a domestic textile industry and expelling foreign-made fabrics from the Chinese market. He wrote: 'Foreign goods, which are made by machines, are cheaper by a half than our goods, which are made by hand.... Until we learn to imitate their methods ... and until we too begin selling our goods in order to obtain our share of the profits, we will fail to close the leak in the barrel because the sale of each extra domestically produced article means that foreigners sell one article less. Among the imported foreign goods nothing is more important than foreign textiles.... I plan, therefore, to select and invite *shenshi* scholars and merchants to purchase foreign machinery and to set up in Shanghai an administration for imitating the production of fabrics along foreign lines. My purpose is for us to obtain a share of the profits that have heretofore gone exclusively to foreigners.'³⁸ The Qing courtiers, many of whom regularly received bribes from Li, usually approved his proposals, contributing to the expansion of his wealth and power.

The Qing Court and the Capitalist Powers in 1860-1885

On 12 January 1875, after a short illness, Emperor Tongzhi died. Since he had left no heir, Empress Dowager Cixi secured the ascension to the throne of her three-year-old nephew Zai Tian, son of Grand Duke Chun and her sister. Though the act was contrary to the dynastic law of succession, it enabled her to retain her command of the imperial court. The dynastic law required that in the event of the death of an heirless emperor, his successor should be someone of the next generation. Zai Tian, however, belonged to the same generation as the deceased emperor. The emperor's widow, the young Empress Xiao Zhe, who was expecting a child, committed suicide in mysterious circumstances, leaving the stage free for Cixi to continue ruling by herself and only formally sharing power with her co-regent, Eastern Empress Cian. (The formality fell away in April 1881, following the latter's sudden death.) During the war with France in 1884-1885, Cixi augmented her power by dismissing Grand Duke Gong and dignitaries under his influence from all high posts. In effect, she headed the government until 1889, when she removed herself to the background after forcing young Emperor Zai Tian (reign title Guangxu) to marry her niece, who kept her informed of every step made by her husband. Though withdrawing from affairs

of state, Cixi followed events in the country and her nephew's conduct with the help of a network of faithful agents. So, the end of Tongzhi did not affect the 'self-strengthening' policy.

In 1875, the Zongli yamen defined the six official components of 'self-strengthening': 1) training of soldiers; 2) building of ships; 3) production of machines (equipment for arsenals); 4) collection of funds for maintaining troops; 5) recruitment of men of ability; 6) promotion of these measures over a long period of time. When word of these six points reached provincial dignitaries, most of them responded with messages of approval. Wen Lin, a dignitary from Shandong, concluded his message with the following words: 'If no internal calamities arise, we shall be able to repulse our external enemies.'³⁹ He thereby reminded the court of the main purpose of 'self-strengthening' and of the need for vigilance vis-à-vis the people of China.

The devotees of 'self-strengthening', for all its half-heartedness, had to hew their way forward through obstacles raised by the ultra-conservatives, who objected to novelty and refused to recognise Western military and technical superiority. The 'self-strengtheners', indeed, resorted to all sorts of dodges, finding historical precedents and 'suitable' quotations from the Confucian classics to back their case.

In 1861, for example, censor Wei Luting, when suggesting use of modern firearms against Taipings, argued that firearms had originated in China under the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) and had merely been improved upon by Europeans. In January 1867, arguing in favour of its proposal for opening a department of astronomy and mathematics at the Tongwenguan, the Zongli yamen sought to squash the objections of ultra-conservatives by recalling that Emperor Kangxi acknowledged the importance of Western astronomy and invited foreign missionary scholars to serve at his court. The Zongli yamen maintained in its memorial that 'the roots of the sciences of Western countries were, strictly speaking, of Chinese origin, and the Europeans admit themselves that their sciences had come to them from the East.... China had originally invented them, and Europe later adopted them.'⁴⁰

The ultra-conservatives, however, did not yield ground. The drought of 1867 offered them a fresh excuse for criticising the Zongli yamen, which they accused in a memorial to the throne of 'actions disagreeable to Heaven'. The writer of the memorial suggested closing the Tongwenguan so 'Heaven should send down rain'.

Opposed to the construction of railways in China, ultra-conservatives maintained, among other things, that railway construction would insult the spirits of mountains and rivers, who could vent their anger by causing droughts and floods; that China was too large

for dependable guarding of railway property, while the theft of just one rail could stop all trains; that the customs service would not be able to collect duties, because trains travelled too quickly and were not always able to stop where desired; that railways were unsuitable for transporting soldiers, because much of the property the latter had did not fit into railway carriages, and so on.

Many Qing leaders and provincial military and civil administrators, though they promoted 'self-strengthening', were themselves bearers of obscurantism and superstition. 'We need no telegraphs and railways,' Zuo Zongtang maintained in 1875, 'because people will endlessly put the former out of repair, while the latter will cause many people to be out of work and to die of hunger.'⁴¹ Zuo believed in evil spirits, and was convinced that the spirit in each cannon ought to be indulged and revered.

Zeng Guofan had blind faith in geomancy (*fengshui*). He earnestly believed that he owed the success of his career to a happy choice of place for the tomb of his grandmother. He put faith in all sorts of omens and auguries, and prayed fervently in Confucian temples for Heaven to send down or to end rain.⁴²

The conductors of 'self-strengthening' saw the capitalist powers as allies in fighting the common people of China. In fact, the alliance, which took shape during the joint suppression of the Taiping Rebellion by Manchu-Chinese troops and the Anglo-French fleet of admirals Hope and Protet, with the active participation of the mercenary Ever Victorious Army of Ward, Burgevine and Gordon, continued for as long as the followers of 'self-strengthening' wielded power. They maintained close ties with the powers through the latter's ministers and consuls in China, through the numerous foreign officials of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, and foreign missionaries W.A.P. Martin, Young J. Allen, and others. In any conflict with foreigners the 'self-strengtheners' acted contrary to national interests, being eager to retain the favour of foreigners at any price (still, in so doing, they followed the old Chinese external doctrine of using barbarians to control barbarians).

Qing foreign policy of that period amounted, in effect, to an endless series of concessions to foreign powers. Dignitaries not only refused to appeal for support to the people against the powers' breaches of Chinese sovereignty, but in fact joined forces with the aggressors against any patriotic actions.

The Qing government never went farther than timid protests. In May 1871, for example, Grand Duke Gong wrote to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, asking him 'to use his influence with the Pope to modify the status of Catholic missionaries in China and to forbid them actions that insulted the laws and customs of the country'. In 1869, bidding farewell to Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British minister

who was leaving for home, he said: 'It is a pity you are not taking along the opium and the missionaries.'⁴³ In 1880, in a talk with Timothy Richard, an English missionary, Li Hongzhang said Chinese Christian converts 'gather round you because they and their friends are in your service and make their living by that. Deny these local agents their pay and there will be no more Christians here'.⁴⁴

On 1 June 1886, writing to the Zongli yamen, Li noted that the unjustified and extortionate demands of missionaries excited profound dissatisfaction among officials and the common people. In a memorial of 25 December 1891 concerning anti-missionary unrest in the Yangzi valley, the Chinese minister to Britain, Xue Fucheng, observed that it was precipitated by the provocative behaviour of Chinese converts. Critical comment on the activity of foreigners was indeed plentiful, but whenever the powers put on pressure, threatening armed reprisals, the Qing dignitaries gave ground.

A.E. Vlangali, the Russian tsar's minister to China, put it thus: 'The Manchu dynasty was ... saved by the latest Anglo-French war.... Through the conclusion of peace and admitting of envoys to Beijing, the Manchu dynasty gained moral support, and even some supplementary material aid.'⁴⁵

In the 1860s and until the 1890s the capitalist countries were engrossed in a scrimmage for colonies, spurred by the growth of capitalist monopoly and the advent of the imperialist era. For the Qing government the setting was certainly unfavourable. From the 1870s on, capitalist powers shifted from the previous policy of consolidating the provisions of their unequal treaties with China to high-pressure commercial and political penetration into the interior provinces. In addition, a process of colonial seizures got under way in countries bordering on China, such as Burma, Vietnam, the Ryukyu islands, and Korea. These incursions were facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which greatly reduced the distance from Europe to China, and by the establishment of telegraphic communications between Shanghai and the outside world in 1871.

Both the Qing government and the Western powers wished, each in its own way, to adjust some of the provisions of the Tianjin and Beijing treaties. French missionaries who translated the 1860 Beijing Treaty had smuggled a passage into the Chinese text whereby French religious missions were allowed to buy and rent land, and build whatever they wished on it, in any province of the empire. Frightened by the countrywide anti-missionary sentiment, which was a reaction to the missionaries' gross interference in China's internal affairs, the Dragon Throne wanted France to annul that provision.

Meanwhile, British merchants in China and chambers of commerce in Britain pressed their government to obtain the right for foreigners

to reside and trade in the interior within a radius of 250 miles from the treaty ports, and to be allowed to navigate inland waterways. Besides, they wanted their goods to be exempted from any additional duties. All transit duties were to be unified, and their collection co-ordinated. In addition, they wanted guarantees that their cargoes would not be confiscated by the customs. The preliminary talks, which culminated in a convention signed by Grand Duke Gong and Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British minister to China, on 23 October 1869, yielded nothing for it was not ratified by the British government, which thought the concessions made by the Chinese insufficient.

In 1874, the British government fitted out a strong military expedition under Colonel Horace A. Browne to reconnoitre trade routes from northern Burma to the Chinese province of Yunnan. Learning of this, the Chinese feudalists in Yunnan called on the tribes inhabiting the border area to resist the invading 'barbarians'. When the interpreter of the expedition, a British consular official in China, one A. R. Margary, was killed on 21 February 1875, the British expedition turned back.

Thereupon, under fierce British pressure over the 'Margary incident', the Qing yielded. On 13 September 1876, in Chifu, Li Hongzhang signed a convention with British minister Thomas Wade wherein Britain acknowledged the Margary incident as settled for an indemnity of 200,000 *liang* of silver and the right to trade on the border of Burma with Yunnan province. China also promised to exempt foreign goods from the *lijin* tax, to apply rights and privileges accorded foreign diplomats in international practice, and protect the interests of foreigners through specially established mixed courts in the open ports. Four more ports were opened to foreign trade - Yichang, Wuhu, Wenzhou, and Pakkoi—plus six anchorages along the Yangzi. But under pressure of Chinese opium planters, the Qing secured a provision for higher customs tariffs on imported opium. Whereupon, solicited by British opium merchants (who in the 1870s were shipping as much as 6 million kg of opium into China yearly through legal customs-controlled channels, not counting the unrecordable contraband trade), the British government refused to ratify the Chifu Convention. Li Hongzhang, closely associated as he was with the Chinese compradore bourgeoisie, had a provision inserted in the convention that foreign goods sold to Chinese middlemen would also be exempted from the *lijin* tax in the interior. The British merchants did not think this good enough. They wanted all imposts, which were holding down China's external and internal trade, abolished.

The Chifu Convention did not halt the British offensive in Burma. On 1 January 1886, in fact, Burma was formally incorporated in the

British Empire. That year the British sent 10,000 troops to Upper (Northern) Burma, where they captured and sacked the capital, Mandalay, and tore down the king's residence.

For tsarist Russia the opening of Chinese ports to foreigners was an unwelcome development: owing to its remoteness, to the weakness of its merchant marine, and its industrial backwardness, it could not, like Britain, France, and the United States, ship goods to China by sea and pick up Chinese goods on the way back. In 1872, three quarters of its Chinese silk came via Prussia, and three quarters of its Chinese tea via Britain. Only one quarter came overland through Siberia, with European capitalists making fortunes out of Russo-Chinese trade.

For these reasons, in spite of the predatory colonial nature of tsarist policy in general, the tsar showed no initiative either in imposing unequal treaties on China or in defending the post-1860 system of treaties. Russia traded with China by the caravan route and the terms were entirely equal. The border between the Qing and Russian empires—the longest land border in the world—was drawn by peaceful diplomatic means under the Aigun and Tianjin treaties of 1858. The 1860 Beijing Treaty gave it its final shape. Further specifications were formalised in the Chuguchak Protocol of 1864 and the siting of border signs in 1869-1870. The growth of Russia's possessions in the Far East and Central Asia involved lands that were not inhabited by any Chinese or Manchurians and were in no way economically bound to China. Russia's consolidation in the Far East caused a violent reaction among the Western powers. Britain, France, and the United States began planning the seizure of the Amur basin, the Maritime Territory, and Kamchatka. At the time of the Crimean War (1853-1855) an Anglo-French fleet attacked the Kamchatka shore, with the Petropavlovsk garrison rendering it heroic resistance. Meanwhile, American merchants and trappers redoubled their penetration into Russian possessions on the Pacific Ocean.

Britain was especially opposed to the consolidation of Russia in Central Asia, for it was itself poised to penetrate the area and intent on isolating its Indian possessions and Afghanistan from Russian influence.

In the late 1860s, several independent feudal states sprang up in Eastern Turkestan and Dzungaria following the expulsion of Manchu-Chinese administrators as a result of the Dungan and Uighur risings: the Uighur Djetishaar state with its centre at Kashgar, the Dungan Sultanate with its centre at Urumchi, and the Uighur Taranchin Khanate with its centre at Kuldja. Yakub beg, ruler of Djetishaar, had close relations with British and Turkish emissaries who, for their part, sought to use him against Russia. To prevent him from capturing the Taranchin Khanate, which would have facilitated British

influence spreading to the Russian possessions in Central Asia, Russian troops occupied Yili (Kuldja) territory in 1871. Some time later, in 1878, having put down the rising of the peoples of Dzungaria and Eastern Turkestan, Manchu-Chinese punitive troops under Zuo Zongtang approached the border of Yili. A special envoy, Chong Hou, was despatched to St Petersburg to negotiate the withdrawal of Russian troops from that territory. In September 1879 in Livadia, Chong Hou signed a treaty, conceding a small slice of the western part of the Yili valley, the Tekes valley and the Muzart pass to Russia, while regaining the city of Kuldja for China. Egged on by the British, the Dragon Throne refused to ratify the Livadia Treaty. On returning to China, Chong Hou was put in irons and sentenced to death. Neither side ratified the Livadia Treaty, and its text was never published by the Russian government. The British press was full of biased reports about it, exaggerating the territorial concessions that China had ostensibly made to Russia.

In view of the deterioration of Russo-British relations following the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the Qing expected the tsarist government to bow and withdraw its troops from Yili. The 70,000-strong army of Zuo Zongtang, which faced a numerically far inferior Russian force along the Yili border, primed for combat.

Prompted by the British and backed by the Hunan scholar gentry, Zuo called for a march on Russia by an army of 200,000 that he would mobilise in Hunan. The Yili population, consisting chiefly of Uighur taranchins (bonded tillers) who had thrown off Manchu-Chinese feudal bondage, fled by the thousands to within the borders of the Russian Empire from the certain death that would be their lot if Qing troops entered Yili.

Though the Russian government took steps to demonstrate an influx of strength in Central Asia and the Far East, and, among other things, despatched a naval squadron under Admiral Lessovsky to Far Eastern waters, it was eager to avoid a war with China owing to the near complete depletion of its treasury as a result of the war with Turkey. Shortly, the Qing, too, saw that a war with Russia was undesirable since it would inevitably strengthen the hand of Britain, France, the U.S.A., and other powers in China and lead to still more brazen encroachments on Chinese sovereignty. Zeng Jize, the Manchu minister in London, journeyed to Russia to renegotiate the Yili issue. A new treaty was signed in St Petersburg on 24 February 1881, under which China's sovereignty in Yili was restored, while Russia retained a negligible piece of land in its western part for distribution to Uighur and Dungan refugees from Dzungaria and Eastern Turkestan. In addition, the border along the upper reaches of the Black Irtys was slightly altered. The indemnity that China was to pay Russia to cover the cost of the temporary occupation of Yili

was raised from the original 5 million roubles to 9 million. Under the St Petersburg Treaty and the attached trade agreements, Russian merchants gained a set of valuable commercial privileges in Xinjiang.

Qing statesmen tended to underestimate the external perils to their country. In 1874, Li Hongzhang composed a lengthy memorial to the emperor, setting forth his ideas about naval defence, and again maintaining that it was far simpler to resist foreign incursions than to put down internal risings despite the rebels' lack of modern arms.

The idea that the people of China presented the greater danger to the regime clearly affected the foreign policy of the Qing government, and this at a time when the capitalist powers were pushing for all they were worth in the Far East and South-East Asia.

Following the bourgeois revolution of 1867-1868 in Japan, known as the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese ruling element sought to mollify the samurai opposition by approving its expansionist ambitions in the Ryukyu islands, Korea, and Taiwan.

Seizing on the massacre by Taiwan aborigines of 54 crew members of a shipwrecked Okinawan sailing vessel in December 1871, the Japanese government sent a 3,000-man military expedition to the island in 1874. (The Ryukyu archipelago, with Okinawa its chief island, was formally incorporated in Japan as a prefecture in 1872. Previously, from 1372 on, the Ryukyu rulers would acknowledge themselves to be vassals now of the Chinese throne, now of the neighbouring Japanese principalities.) The expedition, assisted by Americans, landed in the southern part of Taiwan and conducted punitive operations against local tribes for a number of months, until it was finally recalled to Japan through the intercession of the British minister to Beijing. On 31 October 1874, the Qing government and Japan signed a treaty whereby China paid Japan 1 million *liang* of silver for the slain shipwrecked sailors and the cost of the Japanese punitive expedition.

In 1879, the Japanese government officially forbade the Ryukyu rulers to send a mission to China with symbolic tribute, which precipitated sharp attacks on Qing foreign policy by the *shenshi* scholars in the Manchu capital. But the men in high places engaged in 'self-strengthening' saw no need for defending the Ryukyus. In 1881, when Japan presented its claims to them, Liu Kunyi wrote: 'Though the Ryukyu islands are nominally our tributary, they are irrelevant to China's defence and therefore fail to merit any effort on our part to retain them.'⁴⁶

The active penetration of the capitalist powers into Korea, with Japan leading the way, impelled action by the followers of regent Li Haying (the *tewonggong*), father of the Korean king, against the Japanese resident in Seoul. The Qing reacted by sending 1,000 men and a naval squadron to Korea, where, operating hand in hand with

the pro-Chinese Korean feudalists, the force suppressed the regent's followers. Some of them were executed, while the *tewonggong* was brought to Tianjin and put under house arrest. Japan was paid a large indemnity for the killed Japanese and the destroyed Japanese property.

Meanwhile, the Korean court was rent by internal rivalries. The devaluation of Korean currency, coupled with rice shortages, caused general discontent. In early December 1882, a group of young Korean radicals headed by Kim Ok-kiun started an abortive palace revolution to remove Queen Min, known for her strongly anti-Japanese views. The young conspirators were planning a series of bourgeois reforms modelled on those that had, as they saw it, enabled Japan to become a strong and advanced state following the Meiji Restoration. Takezoe Shinichiro, the Japanese minister in Seoul, ordered the Japanese unit guarding his embassy to support the conspirators. But the Chinese garrison in Seoul, which came to the aid of the Korean government, defeated the reformers and their Japanese helpers. Crowds ransacked the building of the Japanese mission, and killed some thirty people.

On receiving word of the abortive coup, the Qing despatched reinforcements and a naval squadron of five ships to Korea. The Manchu garrison in Seoul was increased to 2,500 men. Not to be found wanting, the Japanese sent a 1,000-man unit and three gunboats. Count Inouye Kaoru, the Japanese negotiator, obtained official apologies from the Korean king and a cash compensation for damages. At the same time, Count Ito Hirobumi, the Japanese Prime Minister, set out for Beijing for talks with the Qing government. He was at first received by Grand Duke Qing, head of the Zongli yamen, and thereupon continued the negotiations with Li Hongzhang in Tianjin.

Li and Ito agreed to a mutual withdrawal of Japanese and Chinese troops from Korea, each side reserving the right to send armed forces there in case of need with preliminary notice to the other side. The Li-Ito accord, signed in April 1885 in Tianjin, thus recognised the equal rights of Japan and the Manchus to interfere in Korean internal affairs. In mid-September 1885, the Qing emperor issued an edict permitting the *tewonggong*, who had by then become a zealous follower of the Qing, to return to Korea after his three-year banishment. The edict officially reaffirmed China's suzerainty over Korea.

Some aspects of China's foreign policy were an object of rivalry between Chinese military-bureaucratic cliques. Li Hongzhang, for example, whose main concern was to obtain funds from the treasury to finance his many commercial and industrial ventures on the pretext of buttressing the defence of North China, objected to Zuo

Zongtang's proposal, first made in 1876, of a military expedition against tsarist Russia in Central Asia.

Foreign diplomats in China were making effective use of the regional groups to further their countries' interests to the detriment of the other foreign rivals. In 1879, the British-owned Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation, backed by the British controlled administration of the Imperial Maritime Customs gave Zuo Zongtang a loan of 1,750,000 *liang* of silver to finance the punitive expedition to Yili on the Russian border at an annual interest of 12.5 per cent covered by customs revenue in Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai, and Hankou. Through Hart, Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs, the British government let the Qing know of its willingness to allow some 100 British army officers to serve in the Chinese army in the coming war with Russia over Yili. In May 1880, Hart invited Gordon, the butcher of the Taipings, to head the foreign military advisers serving in Zuo Zongtang's army. It only remains to be said that the Qing government was not loath to employ foreign mercenaries in its diplomatic service as well. The first diplomatic mission ever to set out for the United States and Europe was headed by Anson Burlingame, a former U.S. minister to China. Foreign advisers recruited among officials of the Imperial Customs went along with Chong Hou's mission to France and the Manchu mission to Cuba, which investigated the condition of Chinese slave labourers on that island.

The first permanent Qing diplomatic mission opened in London in 1877, headed by the Chinese dignitary and Confucian scholar, Guo Songtao, a member of the Hunan landlord clique. By 1879, diplomatic missions were also opened in the United States, Germany, France, Japan, and Russia.

The establishment of diplomatic missions abroad in the latter half of the 1870s was prompted most of all by the wish of the advocates of 'self-strengthening' to play on the contradictions obtaining between the capitalist powers.

The 1884-1885 War with France

The Qing government was determined to keep Vietnam within its political, military, and economic orbit. In 1788, during the reign of Emperor Qianlong, Manchu-Chinese troops numbering 200,000 invaded Northern Vietnam in three columns from Yunnan, Guizhou, and Liangguang on the pretext of putting down the *teishon* uprising and reinstalling King Le Thieu Thong, who had fled to China from the rebellious people, on the throne. The heroic resistance of the *teishon*, aided by the entire people of Vietnam, brought about

the rout of the Qing army in 1789, whose surviving units hastily withdrew into China. The fact that the two countries had a long land border and traditional economic ties enabled the Qing, who had given up the idea of any new acts of aggression for a time, to maintain good relations with Vietnam throughout the 19th century, while considering it formally a tributary country.

In 1865, Liu Yongfu, a native of Guanxi province and member of the Triad secret society, who had collaborated with the Taipings against government troops, crossed the border into Northern Vietnam at the head of a 600-man detachment of followers who called themselves the Black Flag party, and put several counties under his feudal military control.

The king of Vietnam did nothing to oppose the incursion. On the contrary, he enlisted the aid of the Black Flags against a Miao rising and recruited them for police and administrative functions. In 1869, he granted Liu Yongfu an official Vietnamese title. Liu, who had by then earned his pardon from the Qing government, established contacts with the commanders of Qing troops in the neighbouring Chinese provinces and received funds and armaments from them. In 1881, he extended his sphere of influence to include the suburbs of Hanoi and the delta of the Red river, countering French aggression in North Vietnam jointly with Vietnamese troops.

In 1858, having signed the Tianjin Treaty, the French moved the troops they had in China to Indochina. In 1859, they captured Saigon, and in 1862 took possession of three provinces—Saigon, Meehou and Bienhoa—along with the island of Condore (Poulo Condore). In 1863, they declared Cambodia a French protectorate, and in 1867 turned Cochinchina in South Vietnam into their colony. With a firm hold on the Mekong basin, they then thrust in a northerly direction to the Red river with the aim of crossing into Yunnan province in China. In 1873, to reconnoitre the shortest route to China, Frenchman Jean Dupuis took a cargo of arms along the Red river to the Chinese authorities in Yunnan, who were busy suppressing a Mohammedan insurrection.

To keep down the Vietnamese, who were objecting to the use of their territory for transit trade with China, France despatched a force under the command of Francis Garnier. Garnier's unit managed to entrench itself in the Red river delta, but he himself was killed in one of the skirmishes.

In 1874, the French concluded a treaty of peace and alliance with Annam (in South Vietnam). They recognised Annam's independence and assured its king that France would protect his throne against outside encroachments and internal disorders. Taking it for granted that Tonkin (in North Vietnam) was within his domain, the French required him to drive out Liu Yongfu and his Black Flag party. This

he proved unable to do, and in the spring of 1882 the French fitted out their own expeditionary force under Colonel H.L. Rivière, who captured Hanoi on 25 April.

In December 1882, the Qing promised the French minister to Beijing, Frederic Bourée, to recall the Black Flags and to permit trade with Yunnan via the Red river valley, provided France gave up the idea of conquering North Vietnam. The Qing were prepared to guarantee the independence of Vietnam jointly with France. But a change of cabinets in France in February 1883, with Jules Ferry coming to power with far-reaching imperialist designs in Indochina, caused the agreement to collapse. Bourée was recalled from Beijing, and in May the French Chamber of Deputies voted for credits of 5.5 million francs to finance a military expedition to North Vietnam.

Unity was sorely lacking in the Manchu government on how to deal with France and its colonial seizures in Vietnam. A section of metropolitan dignitaries, especially Manchus, were undisturbed by the threat of France capturing Vietnam and of a possible French aggression in South China. For them the chief danger came from internal disorders and a possible foreign invasion of North China, which was likely to jeopardise the imperial capital. In 1882, the Manchu Bao Ting maintained: 'We cannot afford to lose Korea ... even though we may lose Yunnan and Guizhou.... But if Korea is lost, the entrance to the Gulf of Zhili will be instantly lost.' And in 1884, in a memorial to the emperor, the dignitary Deng Chengxiu wrote: 'The Gulf of Zhili is the door to the capital and more important than Yunnan or Guangdong-Guangxi.'⁴⁷ This was also Li Hongzhang's way of thinking. For him peace in North China was the prime consideration, and for its sake he was prepared to turn a blind eye on any foreign incursions in countries neighbouring on China in the south. The southern Chinese cliques, on the other hand, notably Zeng Jize, leader of the Hunan clique, were spoiling for a fight. They demanded that the Dragon Throne intervene energetically in the Franco-Vietnamese conflict. Zeng declared: 'Vietnam belongs to China.... China is therefore obliged to defend the entire territory of Vietnam.'⁴⁸ Among the reasons why the mandarins of Hunan were opposed to foreign commercial and political penetration in China was the loss by Hunan province of its leading place in foreign trade following the First Opium War, when more ports were opened to Western merchants. Until 1842, in fact, all goods shipped abroad from Guangzhou had passed through Hunan, and the *shenshi* of the province were yearning for the old days to return.

On 1 May 1883, the emperor put Li Hongzhang in command of South China armed forces. Li presented a set of arguments against his appointment. He argued among other things that North Vietnam was a poor country for which the French would not brave a war in

malaria-ridden swamp-land. Besides, he added, once the French learned that the crack Anhui armies were being moved to the South, they would lose no time to attack in the North. In the Military Council he had the support of Grand Duke Gong, and in the Zongli yamen that of Wu Tingfen and Zhou Jiamei. So Li's arguments had effect, and he returned from Shanghai to the North.

Meanwhile, in mid-August, the French went into action against the Black Flag in the Red river valley, while Admiral A.A.P. Courbet tore down the defences of Hué. On 25 August 1883, a new treaty was concluded with Vietnam turning it into a French protectorate. The war party in the Manchu court insisted on sending reinforcements to Liu Yongfu's Black Flag, and attacked Li's pacific policy. The throne finally decided to send arms and ammunition to the Black Flags, and to move its regular troops from Yunnan and Guangxi into North Vietnam, where by January 1884 it assembled a force of 50,000 (including the Black Flags). In March 1884, with a 16,000-man army the French defeated the Chinese at Bacninh. On 8 April 1884, word of this reached the Empress Dowager, who jumped at the opportunity to dismiss Grand Duke Gong and four other members of the Zongli yamen.

The vacancies thus created were filled by men of the war party, with Grand Duke Chun, father of the under-age emperor, at their head. Prince Li was made chief of the Military Council, and Grand Duke Qing chief of the Zongli yamen. But the purge of Grand Duke Gong's followers from top posts did not seriously affect government policy. Cixi had only used the military defeat as a long-awaited pretext for getting rid of Gong who, in her opinion, had concentrated too much power in his hands and was slipping out of her control.

The reshuffle was also, in a way, a concession to public opinion. The true intention of the Empress Dowager, alarmed as she was by the widespread criticism of the Qing regime and the near universal growth of anti-foreign feeling, was to secure the quickest possible settlement of the conflict with France. Reports of the departure North of a French fleet under Admiral Sébastien Lespès from Hong Kong and of Admiral Courbet's squadron sailing to join it, prompted the Qing to make concessions. The court dismissed Zeng Jize, known to be in favour of war, from the post of minister to Paris, leaving him only the posts of minister to London and St Petersburg. Li Hongzhang was instructed to negotiate with the French plenipotentiary, François Fournier, who arrived in Tianjin on 5 May. On 11 May, Li and Fournier concluded a provisional convention, which provided for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam. France renounced claims to any indemnity, guaranteed the southern borders of the Qing Empire, and acknowledged its influence in Vietnam. The final peace was to have been signed in

three months. But on 23 June, a clash occurred between French and Chinese troops at Bac-le, a Vietnamese village 80 km south of the Chinese border. This torpedoed the preliminary agreement and led to a renewal of hostilities.

In the morning of 23 August, taking advantage of the high tide, the biggest of Admiral Courbet's warships blockading the Min river estuary, *Triomphant*, sailed 20 miles upriver to Fuzhou, and shot up 11 modern Chinese warships, 12 war junks, and a number of other vessels. Though the French fleet had been patrolling the Min estuary for some days and Fuzhou harbour had been hastily abandoned by all British and American ships the day before, the Chinese command had taken no precautionary measures. As a result, the Fujian fleet was sunk in a matter of fifteen minutes. Thereupon, the French trained their guns on the Fuzhou docks and levelled them with the ground. Neither Li Hongzhang nor Zeng Guoquan, in charge of South China's defence, sent any aid to Fuzhou. On 1 October, Admiral Courbet with a landing party of 2,250 men carried out a successful attack on Jilong in Taiwan, and on the 23rd the French announced a blockade of the island. In early December 1884, seven Chinese naval vessels were poised to sail for Taiwan, but two of them were recalled by Li Hongzhang on the pretext of imminent trouble in Korea. The remaining five warships of Zong Guoquan's fleet ran into Courbet's squadron in a fog off Shipu near the Zhejiang coast on 13 February 1885, evaded an engagement, and turned back. Two of them were sunk by the French. The defeat of the Qing navy was due less to faults in equipment, and much more to the faulty system of command and poor drill of the ships' crews.

In February 1885, following a series of defeats, the fighting in Vietnam had begun to turn in favour of the Chinese. The Qing had sent substantial reinforcements there and appointed a new commander, General Feng Zicai, who recaptured Langson on 28 March and was about to mount a major offensive on Bacninh and Honghoa. The French expeditionary force was on the brink of disaster. But Feng's offensive never came off. Orders to cease fire arrived from Beijing. Defying the urgings of the war party, notably those of the Liangguang viceroy, Zhang Zhidong, the Empress Dowager was determined to sign a peace with France at any cost.

On 9 June 1885, a peace treaty was concluded in Tianjin. The courageous stand of Vietnamese patriots, Liu Yongfu's Black Flag and the Chinese regulars under Feng Zicai had frustrated France's plan of subjugating China's rich southern and south-western provinces, of building a railway from Vietnam to China, and of receiving a large Chinese indemnity for its pains. Still, the Qing were compelled by the war to renounce their suzerainty over Vietnam and grant France preferential privileges in South China. The war had cost China dearly.

Apart from the considerable loss of troops from diseases and hardships in the Vietnam campaign and loss of the Fujian and part of the Nanyang southern squadron, the demolition of the shipyards in Fuzhou and the Taiwan port of Jilong, the Manchu government sustained heavy financial losses and fell under the sway of foreign, notably British, banks that provided the cash to pay for the war. Between September 1883 and February 1885, the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank alone granted the Qing seven loans totalling 126 million *liang*.

The Qing's intense efforts to end the war quickly by peaceful means were prompted chiefly by their fear of the patriotic movement of the common people in China's southern provinces, which was fast gaining in scale, and by the liberative thrust of the hostilities in Vietnam. There had been anti-missionary and anti-foreign unrest in the southern provinces earlier on, from 1880 to 1883, spurred by French aggressiveness in Vietnam. The most serious of the incidents, accompanied by arson and attacks on missionaries and Christian converts, were registered in Yunnan, Guangdong, and Shandong in 1883. On 12 August 1883 in Guangzhou a crowd of 2,000 over-ran the foreign quarter in Shamian. The pirate assault of the French fleet on the Chinese squadron in Fuzhou had fired a fresh wave of protests in Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. This had prodded the Qing to formally declare war on France on 26 August 1884. The declaration of war had, however, only given fresh impetus to anti-foreign demonstrations.

On 19 September 1884, in Chaozhou, Guangdong province, the populace drove out the Catholic missionaries and ransacked their homes. The anti-foreign demonstrations were joined by Chinese soldiers. The disturbances spread rapidly to the neighbouring counties, where proclamations were distributed not only against the French, but also against local officials and rich merchants. Patriotic sentiment also spread among the scholar gentry in the maritime provinces, who collected large amounts of money for the war needs of the Manchu government. They and the merchants recruited and equipped volunteer units, and formed flotillas of war junks to defend the coast.

On 22 September 1884, a few warships of Courbet's squadron were laid up in the Hong Kong docks for repairs, but Chinese dockers refused to handle them. Boatmen and porters joined in declining to render the French any services. On 3 October, armed clashes erupted between the Chinese populace and foreigners. All European shops in Hong Kong were closed. The following day a general strike began, joined by traders and students. The British colonial authorities were compelled to turn for aid to Zhang Zhidong, viceroy of Liangguang, who enlisted the assistance of wealthy merchants and the scholar gentry and only then, with considerable difficulty, finally managed

to end the strike, which had paralysed the British colony.

Patriotic sentiment also spread to overseas Chinese. They collected 5 million *liang* for the war needs of the Manchu government in San Francisco, and as much as 10 million *liang* in Japan. Donations were also made by Chinese residents in Cuba and other countries.

These were the pressures that had compelled the Qing government to render resistance to France.

It had bought large quantities of arms in Germany and the United States in all haste, ordered naval vessels in Britain, fortified the naval base in Port Arthur (Lüshun), and deployed some 20,000 regular troops to North Vietnam. N.F. Ladizhensky, Russian charge d'affaires in Beijing, noted: 'If it had not heeded the people, its shaky prestige could have been gravely affected, and concessions to the French might have had serious repercussions for the Manchu dynasty.'⁴⁹

Reactions to 'Self-Strengthening' and Foreign Penetration (1885-1895)

The ten years between China's wars with France and Japan (1885 and 1894) saw vigorous though relatively peaceful penetration into the country of imperialist powers. Using the concessions, rights and privileges they had wrested from the Dragon Throne earlier as a beachhead, the powers were thrusting inland to extend their spheres of influence and seize economic advantages. The big ports of the empire, like Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou, and Hankou, which had large foreign concessions and settlements, served as support bases for economic and ideological penetration deep into China's interior. By 1890, as many as 32 port cities had been opened by the Qing to foreign trade.

In those ten years, by 1895, China's foreign trade had grown from 153 million *liang* to 315 million, or 105 per cent, with imports exceeding exports by 28 million. Ranking first in the China trade was the British Empire, which accounted for some two-thirds of Chinese imports and over half its exports. The others, notably France, Germany, and the United States, strained to keep up. In the 1880s the chief item of U.S. export was kerosene, with textiles next on the list. German capital, too, was driving into China, and in 1889 the German-Asiatic Bank was founded in Shanghai to facilitate expansion.

In the 1870s and 80s the rich developed countries were occupied in exporting capital. In China, as in most other colonial and dependent lands, foreign investment was directed above all to railway construction. In 1872, Jardine, Matheson and Co. built a railway linking Shanghai to Wusong; the project was bought by the authorities

the same year, and destroyed. But after railway construction got underway in North China under the patronage of Li Hongzhang, foreign interest was aroused. The Franco-Chinese treaty of peace signed in 1885 contained an article that if the Chinese government decided to build railways, it would turn mainly to French industrialists for the requisite material and equipment. Seizing on the implications of this provision, agents of foreign firms headed for China. In the autumn of 1885, a General Wilson, representing a leading U.S. railroad company, was among the first to arrive in Tianjin to negotiate with Li Hongzhang. On his heels came agents of a German syndicate, including the Diskonto Bank, the Deutsche Bank, and others, in which von Brandt, the German minister to Beijing, was actively involved. Agents of French railway companies brought to Tianjin a locomotive, cars, and rails for a narrow-gauge railway to give a first-hand demonstration of what they could offer. The British, too, delivered two locomotives to Shanghai and made a gift of a toy-sized model railway to the viceroy of Liangguang. Tsarist Russia, indeed, was the only great power that took no part in the scramble for the Chinese industrial market, because it was not yet industrially advanced enough.

In their concessions in Chinese cities and in the British colony of Hong Kong, the capitalist powers, notably Britain, put out newspapers and journals to influence the thinking of China's ruling element. In 1862, in Shanghai, the English-language daily, *North China Daily News*, carried a thrice weekly supplement in Chinese, *Shanghai xinbao*. Ten years later, a Briton named F. Major, a tea merchant and owner of a match and pharmaceuticals factory in Shanghai, began publishing a Chinese-language paper, *Shenbao*. The following year, another British-owned paper, *Hubao*, began appearing in the port city, and in 1893 the British Chamber of Commerce started putting out *Xinwenbao*, which it soon sold to American interests. In 1889, the British-owned English-language *The Chinese Times* began appearing in Tianjin, along with its Chinese-language counterpart, *Shibao*. Both papers, like the rest of the British press in China, never missed a chance to hit out at Russia. Besides, the British, French, and American missionaries published a number of Chinese-language journals—*Jiaohui xinwen*, *Wanguogongbao*, *Yiwenlu*, *Tonghua xinbao*, *Gezhi xinwen*, and so on.

While powerless to gag this Western propaganda, the Qing cut short all attempts of Chinese merchants and the burgeoning intelligentsia to launch private Chinese newspapers. In 1874-1875, backed financially by Guangzhou merchants, Rong Hong, the first Chinese graduate engineer educated abroad, published a private Chinese-language paper, *Huibao*, in Shanghai. Owing to harassment by the authorities, he invited a Briton to be its editor, but finally closed the paper

down. In 1876, the *Xinbao*, a mouthpiece of the merchant class, began coming out in Shanghai, in effect controlled by the local imperial superintendent. And in Guangzhou, from 1886 to 1891, private interests published *Guangbao*, which was closed by the authorities for 'insulting the governor'.

The landlords of South China and the Yangzi valley, who dealt in industrial and food crops in the home and foreign markets, merchants (the commercial bourgeoisie), and money-lenders were highly active at the time in commerce and industry.

In the Qing Empire the more substantial sources of the initial accumulation of capital were the feudal rents and various levies collected from peasants and artisans, the personal fortunes of various warlords garnered by unmitigated plunder during the suppression of peasant risings and the insurrections of non-Han minorities, the revenue gleaned from patents (chiefly in the salt trade), and the profits of banks, usurers, and money-changers in home and foreign trade.

Owing to the unfavourable conditions for commerce and industry under the Qing regime, this capital was usually invested in real estate, valuables, and works of art, credit and money-changing enterprises, family and clan temples, libraries, and the like. The oppressive feudal restrictions, coupled with the wanton abuses of the local authorities and the competition of foreign imports, prompted some of the burgeoning native capitalists (chiefly from the maritime provinces of South and East China) to emigrate overseas, notably to Siam, Malaya, the Philippines, French Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies (without, however, cutting themselves completely adrift from the native Chinese provinces).

A section of the Chinese bourgeoisie associated itself with foreign capital. In their commercial transactions in treaty ports and concessions, foreigners made extensive use of the services of Chinese middlemen, the compradores or *maiban*. While serving in foreign firms, these latter had their own commercial or industrial enterprises, and were not loath to invest capital in foreign undertakings. Members of the Chinese feudal bureaucracy, too, were pleased to put their money in enterprises and banks owned by leading compradores.

Right up to the end of the 19th century, the compradore bourgeoisie did not yet begin to set itself apart from the nascent Chinese national bourgeoisie. There were patriotic individuals in its midst who sought to end the dependence on foreign capital and launch out on independent enterprise. They criticised the government's 'self-strengthening' policy and suggested that it carry out certain bourgeois reforms. (Later, in the 20th century, the era of advanced imperialism, most Chinese compradores identified their interests with those of various imperialist powers and monopolies.)

Ever mounting resistance was put up by the rising Chinese bour-

geoisie to the Qing policy of encouraging mixed enterprise by private and treasury capital under bureaucratic supervision—a policy vigorously pursued by the northern and other regional cliques. Members of the Chinese national bourgeoisie expressed their discontent over the arbitrary handling of affairs in these mixed companies by the bureaucratic agents of local and central authorities. In a pamphlet put out at the time, its Chinese author wrote: 'Though the merchant put in his capital, he is no more than an outsider.... He is not even consulted either on what the enterprise spends or on the selection of administrative staff.... The merchant shareholders and the management are as far apart as heaven is from earth.'⁵⁰

As the commercial and industrial enterprises of the young Chinese national bourgeoisie grew it came into collision with the feudal order maintained by the Qing administration and, indeed, with foreign capital.

In 1890, the Chinese-owned Shanghai Cotton Mill began marketing machine-made cotton goods whose quality was as good as that of the imported article. With Chinese industry stepping on the stage as a competitor to imported commodities, the capitalist powers redoubled pressure on the court, insisting that foreigners should be allowed to set up industrial enterprises in China. And though the throne turned down the joint submissions to that effect by the diplomatic corps in 1882 and 1883, foreigners gradually began to establish their own docks, their own silk-reeling, dyeing, and match factories, their own gas works, and electric power companies. In 1888, defying the objections of the Chinese authorities in Shanghai, Boyds, a British firm, launched a cotton ginny. This triggered strident protests among the national bourgeoisie, who demanded that the government ban the importation of foreign machinery. Liangjiang viceroy Zhang Zhidong, who was also the imperial superintendent of trade in southern ports, instructed the Shanghai Customs to withhold permits for foreigners to bring in machinery and other equipment. His action (prompted chiefly by Zhang's own interests, for he had capital in the Hankou textile mill and wanted no competitors) precipitated vehement protests by the diplomatic corps in Beijing.

But the dawn of Chinese entrepreneurship was set in an extremely backward feudal economy that had not recovered from the ravages of the opium trade, the Anglo-French intervention, and the popular revolts of the 1850s and 60s.

After Cixi, the empress dowager, had removed Grand Duke Gong from state affairs, Li Hongzhang began playing a still more independent part in the empire's home and foreign policy. He concentrated most of his efforts on building military strength and on personal gain. His commercial and industrial enterprises, as well as his foreign policy, were both centred on these aims. The 'squeeze' he made on

arms purchases abroad deterred him from organising the manufacture of requisite equipment in China. On the contrary, he kept recommending the court to continue the purchases. He clamoured for treasury funds and private capital for the shipping, telegraph, coal, and other companies under his control, and established close ties with foreign firms and banks through the compradore community. His great power had its territorial and economic focal points in North China, with its centre at Tianjin, and in South Manchuria (Liaodong peninsula) and East China, with its centre at Shanghai. In addition he had hereditary estates in Anhui province.

Li put his lieutenants in charge of all the key posts in these regions. They followed in his footsteps and used 'self-strengthening' methods for personal gain. Their leader saw to it that the government granted monopoly rights and privileges to enterprises and companies in which he had a personal stake. At his request, dated 23 April 1882, for example, the Shanghai Cotton Mill, which he owned, was granted a monopoly on manufacturing cotton fabrics and yarn for a term of ten years from the day the mill began operating. Construction was completed in 1890, but in September 1893 the mill burned down. To retain the monopoly, Li and his assistant in commercial and industrial matters, Sheng Xuanhuai, constituted an Administration for Yarn and Fabrics, which taxed goods made at any Shanghai textile factory 1 *liang* per bale for a number of years and took charge of all dealings between textile factory owners and the authorities and customs.

A foreign observer personally acquainted with Li Hongzhang, wrote: 'He is the richest man in the world.... The foundation of his enormous fortune was laid at the time of the Taiping Rebellion.... Since then he considerably expanded his influence, augmented his power, and used his official status to amass wealth of such proportions that people in China used to say, "any dog that barks in Li's favour is a fat dog". His family owns hundreds of thousands of acres of land and countless silk stores and pawn shops up and down the empire.'⁵¹ After his death in 1901, Li left his children and grandchildren an inheritance valued at 40 million *liang* of silver.

Like other 'self-strengtheners', Li employed a large number of foreign, mainly German, advisers and instructors. In 1885, there were 124 German officers in his army. Western drilling of Chinese troops by foreign instructors was introduced by an imperial edict of 17 November 1862. The edict said: 'Rebellious bandits scatter in all directions and cause disturbances in the South-East; they have spread to Shanghai, Ningbo, and other ports where government troops proved weak, so that at the present moment we are compelled to use foreigners to train our troops as part of the plans of self-strengthening.'⁵²

The army and naval colleges founded by Li Hongzhang in North China, like those founded by Zhang Zhidong in Guangzhou in 1887 and by Zeng Guoquan, Zeng Guofan's younger brother, in Nanjing in 1890, had British, French and German military instructors. Li also had a large number of foreign economic advisers and advisers on foreign relations, and was continuously surrounded by agents of foreign munitions firms. Especially active shortly before the war in Korea was a German businessman representing Krupp, Hermann J. Mandl, the German customs commissioner in Tianjin Gustav Detring, Li's long-time confidant, and Major Constantin von Hanneken, Li's military adviser. Counting on large orders of arms from Germany, they tried to attune Li to the idea of a conflict with Japan over Korea. In 1881, von Hanneken obtained a contract to build expensive fortifications in Port Arthur, and unscrupulously supplied the Chinese army with useless arms. The project of a fortified zone in South Manchuria proved for him a source of fabulous profit.

Li Hongzhang had long since understood the importance of naval forces in suppressing internal revolts and, indeed, in repulsing outside incursions. Having consolidated his political and military position in Zhili, he set out to build a modern naval force as one more means of multiplying his influence on the home and foreign policy of the Qing government. In a memorial approved by the court in 1874, Li discussed the problem of naval defence, suggesting that the court buy modern warships abroad and train naval officers. Among the aims behind this was to buttress the position of his clique. As he saw it, one of the chief functions of the navy would be to protect the passenger and cargo vessels of his China Merchants Steam Navigation Co. Disturbed by the growing military power and political influence of his rival, Zuo Zongtang, the viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang, Li urged the emperor to establish three independent commanderies—the northern, eastern, and southern—counting on the assistance of his protégé, governor of Jiangsu Ding Richang, to control two of them. When in 1875, the Qing adopted a system of two military regions—northern (*beiyang*) and southern (*nanyang*)—he saw to it that Ding Richang was made governor of Fujian and director of the Fuzhou Arsenal. The office of Liangjiang viceroy was held successively by Li's close followers—Li Zongxi, Liu Kunyi, and Shen Baozhen. Li himself was, among other things, special imperial commissioner for the defence of the northern military region, that is, its chief commander.

His intimate, the barely literate Ding Richang, chief of the Anhui army's river flotilla, Li promoted to the post of commander of the Beiyang Fleet. The men and officers of the fleet, who hailed mostly from Fujian province and were fired by provincial separatism, were hostile to Ding and his deputy, the British captain, W.M. Lang.

In 1882, the Nanyang and Beiyang fleets had 22 fairly up-to-date warships between them, some of which had been bought in Britain and Germany and some built in Shanghai and Fuzhou. But their armaments and equipment were not the same, the ships themselves were registered in different ports, and they flew different flags. There were no unified service regulations, no unified plan of action, no unified system of signals. On 13 October 1885, soon after China's defeat at the hands of France, the Board of Admiralty was set up by imperial decree, with Grand Duke Chun at its head and Prince Qing and Li Hongzhang his deputies. By this decree, control over the making of a single naval force was entrusted to Li.

After the outbreak of the Franco-Chinese war, the Qing had indeed taken some steps to enhance the ability of the empire to defend itself. The court was especially concerned about heightening the combat readiness of troops quartered in Manchuria and North China. But in 1888, the funds allocated to the Board of Admiralty to buy warships abroad were redirected with Grand Duke Chun's consent to building a country summer palace, Yiheyuan, for Empress Dowager Cixi. A pavilion of snow-white marble was erected on the shore of Lake Kunminghu modelled as a moored paddle steamer—a suggestive reminder of the origin of the funds that financed its construction.

In 1893, the Board of Admiralty was closed down. The Qing navy, as events showed, had drawn no lessons from the defeat at the hands of the French. When the war with Japan broke out it had no unified command, and was unready for combat. With rivalry running high between the regional cliques, they built ships of different types in their respective shipyards, and when making purchases abroad applied to different suppliers—Britain or Germany or France. This meant there could be no unification: ship's guns and fort artillery came from different foreign firms (Krupp, Nordenfellt, or Armstrong), were of different calibre, and lacked the requisite stockpiles of shells. The naval officers were kept on a low rung of the social ladder. Being natives of Fujian province, they did not belong to the privileged element close to Li Hongzhang, which consisted chiefly of the top commanders of his Anhui troops, now officially named the Beiyang Army.

Within the sphere of their satrapies, the group leaders were in complete command—absolute and despotic rulers. The discipline in Li Hongzhang's armies was bloodcurdling. The 'naval regulations' (*Haijun zhang cheng*) introduced in 1890 in the Beiyang Squadron, then numbering 27 fairly up-to-date warships manned by 304 officers and 2,820 seamen, contained articles of the military criminal code in use at the time of Emperor Yongzheng (1723) which, among others, provided for the following punishments: '1) he who does not move forward when the drum beats or does not move back in time at the

sound of the gong shall be beheaded ... 2) he who retreats before the enemy without orders or shows fear or begins grumbling shall be beheaded ... 7) he who insists that he has seen the devil in his dreams and misleads others with this omen shall be executed ... 8) the soldier who pretends sickness shall have his head severed from his body.'⁵³

On 19 February 1887, having come of age and married Cixi's niece, Emperor Guangxu was formally installed on the throne. There was little fanfare, the ceremony was modestly arranged. Though Cixi had, on the face of it, withdrawn from the affairs of state, she watched with eagle eye the alignment of political power at the court, where members of Li Hongzhang's northern clique were playing a leading role. The Russian minister to Beijing, A.P. Kassini, who submitted his letters of credence to Guangxu on 12 November 1894, said of the young emperor in a despatch that he was 'very young and had a rather sickly appearance'.⁵⁴ Priorly, Kassini had written to St Petersburg of 'the strained relations that have since some time ago been noticed between the reigning Emperor and the Empress Dowager'.⁵⁵ He ascribed this to Cixi's interference in matters of state. Brought up by the imperial tutor Weng Tonghe, who gravitated towards the Hunan clique and looked upon Li Hongzhang with great disfavour, but who was all the same an advocate of 'self-strengthening', Guangxu endeavoured to oppose thievery and dereliction of duty in high places, and tried to fight the wholesale bribery and 'squeeze' in the empire's bureaucratic machine. All his efforts, of course, came to nought.

Owing to frequent natural calamities, absence of any safeguards against floods, droughts, and pests, and lack of any aid to people in the disaster areas, farming sank to waste and ruin. The peasants, facing hunger and death, left their homes and sought salvation in neighbouring counties and provinces, or in outlying regions. When the dykes on the Huanghe collapsed in 1888 there was disastrous flooding in the province of Shandong, followed the next year by a drought. In the summer of 1889 bad floods were registered in Guangdong province.

In 1885, a special memorial from the Office of Taxes referred to irregularities in tax collection. 'Disorder reigns in the administrative offices,' it said. 'Troops are quartered up and down the country, and the staff of officials in various institutions is inflated out of all proportion. As a result, the treasury has no money, while expenditures rise day after day.... Land tax collecting procedures are completely ignored, officials are guilty of embezzlement, orders are disobeyed.... Each year we receive 10 million *liang* less than is due from taxes.... These immense sums do not reach the treasury, and are not used for the needs of the people; they flow into the pockets of avaricious officials and civil servants.'⁵⁶

Small wonder that from the late 1880s on there were more distinct signs of anti-government and anti-foreign unrest, provoked not least of all by the heightened activity of foreign missionaries.

By the early 1890s, Catholic priests in China numbered 628 Europeans and 335 Chinese. They controlled 541,720 Chinese converts, 24,900 Chinese preachers, 2,942 churches and chapels, 1,850 missionary schools with 31,625 pupils, and 36 theological colleges with a student body of 744. The Protestant missions of China had a personnel of nearly 6,000 (in 1890). Under the unequal treaties, missionaries were privileged to travel freely in the country to preach Christianity. They were permitted to buy or lease land in any part of the empire, and to build on it. Furthermore, they were not subject to Chinese law. The general background to their activity was one of vigorous colonial penetration. Naturally, this triggered widespread disaffection among the Chinese.

Though unco-ordinated and spontaneous, the anti-foreign (chiefly anti-missionary) actions in various provinces were expressive of indignant opposition to the mounting aggressiveness of the powers in the closing decades of the 19th century. (The capitalist system was entering its imperialist stage, marked by a frantic scramble for colonies, by plunder, by redivision of the world.) Each fresh act of foreign aggression encountered strong patriotic resistance by the mass of the people. Anti-missionary activity became especially widespread at the time of the war with France in 1884-1885. On 4 October 1884, at Wenzhou, Fujian province, the populace ransacked foreign religious missions and homes of foreigners. In 1884-1885 a wave of anti-foreign actions rolled across Guangdong, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Shenxi, and Shanxi provinces. Anti-missionary revolts were registered in Chongqing and various counties of Sichuan province in July 1886. On 15 July 1886, Li Hongzhang informed the Zongli yamen of mass actions against missionaries and Chinese Christian converts by the Chongqing populace. In 1887, in Fuan county, Fujian province, the populace set fire to four Catholic churches. On 5 February 1889 in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, people vented their sense of outrage in ransacking buildings occupied by foreigners. And in early June 1889, there were anti-British riots in Hankou.

In 1890, a new wave of anti-foreign outrage spread in the provinces lining the Yangzi when the Qing government announced under British, French, and American pressure that the city of Chongqing, too, would be opened to foreign trade in March 1891. Actions of protest were initiated by local branches of the Gelaohui secret society, whose leadership contained a fair percentage of *shenshi* elements. The local *shenshi* had, indeed, in proclamations and leaflets demanded expulsion of foreigners from the country some time before, and had handed a petition to Huguang viceroy Zhang Zhidong rebuking the Manchu

government for allowing foreign merchants and missionaries to do business in China. The anti-foreign revolts that broke out in Yangzhou on 20 April 1891 were quelled by armed force. Receiving word of disturbances in the city of Wuhu, the Zongli yamen telegraphed the viceroy in Nanjing to send warships there 'to put down the unrest and restore order'. The viceroy was ordered to send a commissioner to Wuhu to investigate the causes of the rioting, and to punish the ringleaders. The telegram called for measures to stop the dissemination of anti-missionary leaflets and posters. Three Chinese gunboats sent to Wuhu from Nanjing on the insistence of the British consul helped suppress the anti-foreign mutiny. In May, there were similar anti-foreign, chiefly anti-missionary, riots in Anqing, Anhui province, Nanjing and Hanyang, Wuyue and Wuxi. Anti-foreign proclamations were widely distributed in Tianjin, Shanghai, Wuhu, Hankou, and Wuchang.

Prodded by the diplomatic corps, the Zongli yamen issued a notice on 26 May 1891 requiring any 'unruliness' committed against the person or property of a foreigner to be severely punished. The notice warned local authorities that they would be held responsible 'for failing to prevent disturbances, and for inactivity'.⁵⁷ On 13 June, the Qing government published an imperial edict ordering local authorities 'to defend the life and property of foreign merchants and missionaries, and to prevent dishonest rogues from causing them any trouble'.⁵⁸ But the clampdown did not halt the further spread of unrest in the Yangzi area. The Hangzhou authorities were compelled to ask for troop reinforcements to cope with anti-missionary disturbances, and in Hankou and Jiujiang riots were averted solely by a joint demonstration of strength by foreign and Chinese gunboats.

The men of the Zongli yamen, that stronghold of 'self-strengthening', were deeply perturbed by the widespread anti-missionary movement, which had already here and there manifested a distinct anti-government sentiment. On 24 June 1891, high officials of the Zongli yamen begged Emperor Guangxu in a memorial to instruct all top office-holders in the provinces 'to take urgent measures to restore order locally and put an end to incidents, which are fraught with disastrous consequences'. Referring to the causes of the anti-missionary mood of the people, the Zongli yamen put invigoration of secret societies at the top of the list. The memorial pointed out that numerous members of 'bandit leagues' were 'roving' up and down the provinces on the banks of the Yangzi, posting proclamations at every step and inflaming people's sensibilities, inciting unrest. It mentioned the guilt of missionaries who accorded protection to criminal elements. But the main cause of the anti-missionary feeling the Zongli yamen ascribed to the 'fabrication' and spread of 'groundless and malicious rumours' about the missionaries. It was therefore essential, the memo-

rial said, to issue an imperial edict obliging provincial authorities to forbid people to listen to 'malicious rumours' and to 'cause trouble'. The authorities should be instructed to mete out most severe punishment to writers of anonymous proclamations. In conclusion, the memorial noted that owing to incidents being so widespread, 'two criminal troublemakers' had already been executed.

But the disorders did not end. In 1891, the diplomatic corps in Beijing thrice approached the government with demands of firm action to end anti-foreign incidents. The initiative in combating the penetration of foreign missionaries and merchants into the interior of the country, as in the Tianjin events of 1870, came from the local scholar gentry, the *shenshi*. Highly popular in the Yangzi area in the early 1890s was a richly illustrated album by the Hunan *daotai* (county chief) Zhou Han, *Death to the Devil Faith*.⁵⁹ Designed for the illiterate mass, it contained many simple drawings, urging people to drive out foreigners from China. Though patriotic in tenor, the album was morbidly xenophobic and shot through with chauvinist propaganda claiming indisputable superiority of everything Chinese. In addition to being anti-foreign, it was also in some measure anti-government and anti-Manchu.

There was a distinct link between the anti-missionary and anti-foreign movements of 1891-1892 and the visible invigoration of anti-Manchu secret societies. The unrest whipped up by secret societies gripped a considerable part of North and Central China. The greatest turmoil was seen in the provinces along the Yangzi. Foreign observers held that the secret societies were out to foment differences between the Qing government and foreigners in order to take advantage of armed conflicts with the powers to precipitate a rebellion against the Manchu dynasty.

The Qing minister to London, Xue Fucheng, maintained in so many words that there was a link between the popular movements in the Yangzi valley and the activity of secret societies seeking to incite 'disorders' against the Qing.

In the north of China at that time the secret societies Jindandao and Zaili had, indeed, engendered considerable animation. Unlike the primarily anti-foreign complexion of the disturbances along the Yangzi, the struggle here was distinctly anti-dynastic. A rebellion of no small magnitude broke out under Zaili leadership in Rehe province in November 1891. The rebels' central slogan was: 'May the great Ming dynasty, rise and the house of Qing fall'. The government sent a large force into the field: some 15,000 rebels were killed in battle, and nearly 20,000 members of the secret society were executed. The rebellion stimulated anti-government risings in a number of counties of Zhili and Fengtian provinces, which were also brutally suppressed.

The foreign powers and the Qing acted jointly. But all that they

did was in vain. The anti-missionary activity spread throughout the middle reaches of the Yangzi and affected the maritime provinces and the north of China. Not until 1893 did the tide recede. Among the last revolts of that period was the one against Swedish missionaries in Songpu, Hubei province, which culminated in the signing of an agreement between viceroy Zhang Zhidong and the Swedish consul-general in Shanghai. The Chinese promised to execute the ringleaders, to pay the missionaries a compensation, and to restore the demolished buildings of the mission.

Following the war with France, the 'self-strengthening' policy came under serious fire from both the conservative feudal theorists and the ideologues of newly rising social forces. The clash of opinions within the ruling camp burst to the surface in the shape of the *qing yi* movement ('pure', that is, unprejudiced, 'opinion') which insisted on the right of the feudal scholar estate to criticise the government, over-ruling the mid-19th century practice that none but top-ranking dignitaries (up to the 4th rank) were entitled to memorialise the emperor directly, while all others first had to have their memorials endorsed by top-ranking officials (the system was called *yanlu*, 'road of judgement'). The imperial palace was showered with all sorts of memorials censuring various measures of the government.

The main target of the *shenshi* scholars was the home and foreign policy of the promoters of 'self-strengthening'. The devotees of 'pure opinion' called for a return to the olden days and for renouncing novelties—railway construction, 'modern text' schools, diplomatic relations with foreigners, and the like. In 1875-1884, the most active advocates of 'pure opinion' were a group of metropolitan dignitaries, natives of Zhili province, headed by Zhang Zhidong (who later associated himself with the Hunan clique).

On 10 January 1885, annoyed by the deluge of critical memorials, the Empress Dowager officially forbade *yanlu* and censured *qing yi* advocates for their 'immature' memorials 'insulting to the throne'.

Their contacts with the outside world following the establishment of regular diplomatic relations between China and the powers of the capitalist West affected the views of the ruling element of the Qing concerning the social system in the West and China's place in the world. Among the first to reassess the old-time feudal chauvinist idea of China's superiority to the rest of the world, was Guo Songtao, the first Qing minister to Britain and France. 'Arrogance,' he wrote, 'is the occupation of fools, not statesmanlike policy.' In 1879, he submitted a memorial to the throne, attaching six of his letters to prominent dignitaries of the empire in which he expressed disagreement with the official policy of regarding Western countries as barbarian and encouraging boastful bluster about China's superiority. For his pains (the author published the memorial in a pamphlet), Guo was attacked

and manhandled by his countrymen, the Hunan *shenshi*, when he returned from his mission abroad. They described his writing as an 'affront' and as 'damaging to morality'.⁶⁰ In a letter to Li Hongzhang, Guo accused him of neglecting matters of trade and of encroaching on the interests of the Chinese merchants. But not all dignitaries returning from missions abroad followed Guo's example.

Defending the idea of opening a department of astronomy and mathematics at the Tongwenguan, the proponents of 'self-strengthening' countered the objections of the ultra-conservative opposition to studying 'barbarian crafts', by claiming that Chinese science lay at the root of all Western knowledge. This was in 1867. In 1878, the Chinese minister to London, Zeng Jize, too, justified the need for certain reforms in China's administrative system by maintaining that Western political doctrines and systems were borrowed from *Zhou Li* (Code of the Zhou dynasty) and the teaching of Lao-zi. In ancient times, Zeng wrote, Europe was inhabited by barbarians, and derived all its culture, science, and politics from the East, and, more specifically, from the sages of ancient China. Since all the elements of the West's modern political system were of Chinese origin, he argued, China could now take them back without injury to its prestige. In ancient times, China had manufactured numerous modern machines. Then it lost the art of making them. That art had survived in Western lands, and China could therefore adopt them without any qualms.

Li Hongzhang's private secretary and writer of many of his memorials, Xue Fucheng, who was subsequently promoted to a diplomatic post, had plans for reforming the educational system and recommended that more attention be devoted to Chinese crafts and industry. He thought it was high time to raise their place in society, as well as that of the merchants. Xue was a devoted champion of the Qing dynasty. In the early 1890s, he warned that the anti-missionary turmoil in the Yangzi area was likely to evolve into an anti-government movement, and urged the Qing to stamp out the various secret societies.

Twenty-two years after its writing, Feng Guifeng's *Personal Protests from the Study of Jiao Bin* was finally published in Tianjin in 1883. The author, a theorist of 'self-strengthening', called for a return to ancient feudal methods of government, for a revival of Confucianism, though he allowed for the adoption from the West of its 'splendid ships and excellent guns'. The book's publication was meant to revitalise 'self-strengthening', while militating against various attempts at imitation of Western social systems.

Two books appeared in 1884, by Zhang Zimu and Wang Zhichun, that vindicated study of Western science by alleging that astronomy, geometry, chemistry, mechanics, optics, and cosmogony had had their origin in ancient China, and that Western science was merely engaged in elaborating on principles first formulated by the Chinese.

The authors inferred thereby that study of Western science in modern China should not be qualified as 'imitating the West' and was no disgrace to Confucianists. Both authors contended that writing and religion, too, had their origin in China. Among the things Wang recommended to the throne was to take engineering and shipbuilding out of the hands of governmental and provincial officials and to leave them to private interests. Merchants, he said, needed encouragement. Here he referred to the practice of Western states which, as he saw it, were following the spirit and letter of the Chinese classics, and had thus achieved economic prosperity.

In contrast to the theorists of 'self-strengthening', Zhang Zimu called attention to Western political and social systems. In his view many elements of the political pattern in the West (unity of upper and lower classes, social harmony, and the like) had also been borrowed from ancient China. 'It turns out', Zhang wrote, 'that our ancient ideas have survived in the West, though most of the persons elected to parliament from rural areas and towns comport themselves dishonestly; only worthy individuals who merge with the people and enlightened officials can judge correctly about the mood of the people.'⁶¹ While portraying the Western parliamentary system as a Chinese invention, Zhang censured it for being shot through with knavery. He saw the secret of Western wealth and power in what he termed unity of monarchs and subjects, and in the plainness of social relationships; he recommended reviving this lost 'purely Chinese' quality.

In January 1887, the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* in London published an article by Zeng Jize, 'The Sleep and Awakening of China', which was soon put out in Chinese in Hong Kong. Zeng, one of the leaders of the Hunan clique and son of its founder Zeng Guofan, criticised Li Hongzhang's policy and expounded a slightly refurbished version of the official 'self-strengthening' policy, reflecting the aspirations in foreign affairs of the Hunan landed gentry. Zeng suggested that the immediate tasks were 1) to build a modern army and navy and to strengthen coastal defences, 2) to industrialise, 3) to tighten control over Korea, Tibet, and Eastern Turkestan, and 4) to prepare the ground for the abrogation at a future date of the unequal treaties imposed on China by the powers. Zeng called attention to the mistreatment of Chinese emigrants overseas and urged the government to render them legal protection. For Zeng progress in modernising the armed forces was a symbol of China's awakening. He insisted on the further strengthening of defences and on improving the diplomatic service: 'The first thing to do about one's house is to put up a good fence around it, then lock the gate tightly, precluding the intrusion of thieves, and only then begin putting internal affairs in order.'

Zeng's article was attacked by He Qi and Hu Liyuan, members of the compradore and emigrant bourgeoisie in Hong Kong, who said the article was a 'day dream', and 'a flailing of arms in sleep'. They ascribed priority to internal affairs. Foreign affairs, they said, should take a back seat until internal business was put in order. They recommended banishing 'egoism', 'the personal' (*si*), and devote all energy to 'the common' (*gong*) and to 'equality' (*ping*). As they saw it, government should repose on the idea of unity between the monarch and his subjects, which was attainable exclusively by 'just and impartial decrees', eradication of such vices as 'squeeze', and a proper system of selecting men of ability.

Zhang Jian, a spokesman of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang literati, merchants, and industrialists, and later, shortly before the 1911 revolution, a leader of the movement for a constitutional monarchy, was critical of 'self-strengthening' as well. In 1879, his memorial *Setting forth the Tasks Facing the State* criticised the practitioners of 'self-strengthening' for having 'for ten years bought arms and trained an army, spent fabulous sums of money, and made self-strengthening proposals every day, and then, when it came to reaction, proving incapable of making war and, as a consequence, lavishing words of conciliation and begging for peace'.⁶² In 1882, at the height of a Sino-Japanese conflict over Korea, Zhang Jian denounced Li Hongzhang's policies, and stated that Li 'with his theories of peace is injuring the state'.⁶³

Following the Franco-Chinese war of 1884-85, a large number of books and pamphlets appeared extolling Western political systems and urging adoption of certain of their features. The writings were a bizarre blend of Chinese feudal dogma and modern bourgeois ideas. Tang Zhen's *Wei yan* (Warning of Danger), which appeared in 1890, suggested transplanting the Western parliamentary system to Chinese soil. Claiming that the ancient Chinese classic *Li ji* (Book of Rites) contained the injunction 'the ruler must always consult the people', Tang suggested that the highest dignitaries of the Qing Empire, up to the 4th rank, should be made senators, while dignitaries and officials of lower rank should be selected to form a lower chamber. As he saw it, the senate and lower chamber should take over the functions of the Military Council and Censorate. Analogous 'parliaments', he held, should be formed locally out of officials and members of the scholarly gentry. For convenience, Tang suggested moving the capital from Beijing to Xian.

Chen Qiu's treatise on political administration, which appeared in 1893, was focussed on much the same idea of buttressing the feudal system in China as were Feng Guifen's writings in his time, but with the additional thought that the revival of feudal clans and a hereditary aristocracy in China would be a step to a future 'universal com-

monwealth'. Chen held that provinces, prefectures, counties and commanderies ought to be turned into appanage principalities headed by members of the hereditary aristocracy subordinate under a strictly enforced hierarchy to the emperor. The rulers of principalities would have parliaments consisting of officials and performing a consultative function, along with a ramified bureaucratic system handling questions of astronomy, medicine, agriculture, rites, music, punishments, education, and taxes. The author conceived the principalities as autonomous economic and political units.

In due course, Chen suggested, the system would spread to the rest of the world, adding in so many words that whether this would occur under China's hegemony or that of the West depended on which of the two 'manages better to carry out the line of *Zhou li* and the teachings of Confucius'.

Kang Youwei, the Guangdong *shenshi* scholar, completed his utopian theory of communist society recorded in *Datong shu* (Book on the Universal Commonwealth) in 1887. For reasons of censorship, however, it did not see the light of day until the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. He tried to show that humanity could rid itself of the grief and suffering bred by poverty and social inequality if it set up a universal commonwealth with an ideal social system which, he claimed, Confucius had prophetically spoken about in his conversation with his disciple Zi You. Kang's book denounced his contemporary Chinese society, but also showed the imperfections of the social system in Western bourgeois lands. To secure a universal commonwealth, Kang suggested abolishing private property all over the world and bringing people together in large agricultural and industrial production groups that would also serve as the basic social cells. In this future society Kang envisaged harmonious development of individuals, absence of compulsion, abolition of states, frontiers and armies, conclusive public self-government, and encouragement of inventions and discoveries. Apart from utopian egalitarian theories of ancient China, Kang was influenced by the scraps of information he had gathered about the Western social-utopian theories.

In 1892 notions of a universal commonwealth were also advanced by journalist, writer, and historian Wang Tao, who conceived it in the spirit of West European cosmopolitanism.

The appearance in China of various utopian social theories after the Franco-Chinese war was a token of the crisis that gripped the Confucian feudal ideology following its exposure to Western bourgeois ideas, on the one hand, and the wish of China's social theorists of the time to escape the adversities of capitalism, on the other. That they addressed themselves to the egalitarian theories of ancient China was also evidence of the failure of the ruling classes to iron out the long crisis of the Qing Empire's feudal system through the policy of

'self-strengthening'.

In 1893, shortly before the war with Japan, a prominent comprador, Zheng Guanying, wrote an eloquent book on China's chief problems of his time, entitled *Warnings to the Seemingly Prosperous Age* (*Shenshi weiyan*). He discussed politics, military affairs, education, and home and foreign trade. Zheng called for moderate bourgeois reforms along Western lines in all fields he touched, reckoning to strengthen the country and invigorate the ruling Qing dynasty. Though he recommended a constitutional monarchy on the British model, each line he wrote was imbued with loyalty to the Dragon Throne. Other compradores, too, came out in favour of westernisation and among them, Ma Jianzhong, one of Li Hongzhang's intimates and director of his shipping company, and Wang Tao, editor of British-owned Chinese-language dailies and journals.

Spokesmen of new trends in China's social and political thought came on the stage under the impact of the Franco-Chinese war, and the most notable among them were Kang Youwei, who submitted his first memorial to the throne in 1888, and a young Guangdong physician, Sun Yat-sen, a man of obscure peasant origin who in 1893 wrote a letter to Li Hongzhang containing a far-reaching programme of reforms.

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and the Collapse of 'Self-Strengthening'

In the early 1890s, the strains between China and Japan over Korea grew to cyclonic proportions. Li Hongzhang's trusted associate, General Yuan Shikai, the Qing government's resident in Seoul, whom an American adviser of the Korean government, one Owen N. Denny, aptly described as 'smuggler, plotter, and diplomatic ruffian',⁶⁴ was busy hatching plans of annexing Korea. The Japanese mission in the Korean capital, too, was marshalling supporters among Korean public leaders in a bid to turn the country into a Japanese protectorate.

In the beginning of 1894, a mass uprising erupted in Korea, led by the Tonghak (Eastern Doctrine) secret society. It was directed against foreigners and Christian missionaries, but was in effect anti-feudal and anti-government. On the pretext of assisting the King of Korea against the Tonghaks, the Qing sent a force of 1,500, which arrived in Korea on 6 April 1894, and later another unit of 750. Not to be outdone, Japan despatched troops as well. By mid-June it had 4,500 men and officers in Seoul and Chemulpo alone, with several thousand more troops *en route*.

While the Qing and Japan were concentrating their forces, the

Korean government had by and large coped with the Tonghak rising. On 28 June, the Japanese minister to Seoul, Otori, demanded that the Korean king declare his country's independence from China. On 22 July, Japanese troops broke into the royal palace, captured the king and his family and removed them to the Japanese mission, where on 27 July, the king officially declared war on China and requested the Japanese to drive out Chinese troops from his country. Two days before, on 25 July, a Japanese cruiser, *Naniwa*, had attacked and sunk a British-owned steamer, *Kowshing*, under charter to the Qing government, carrying 1,220 Chinese soldiers and officers. On the same day, a Japanese unit attacked a Chinese army encampment, and the Chinese troops were compelled to withdraw to the fortress of Pyongyang.

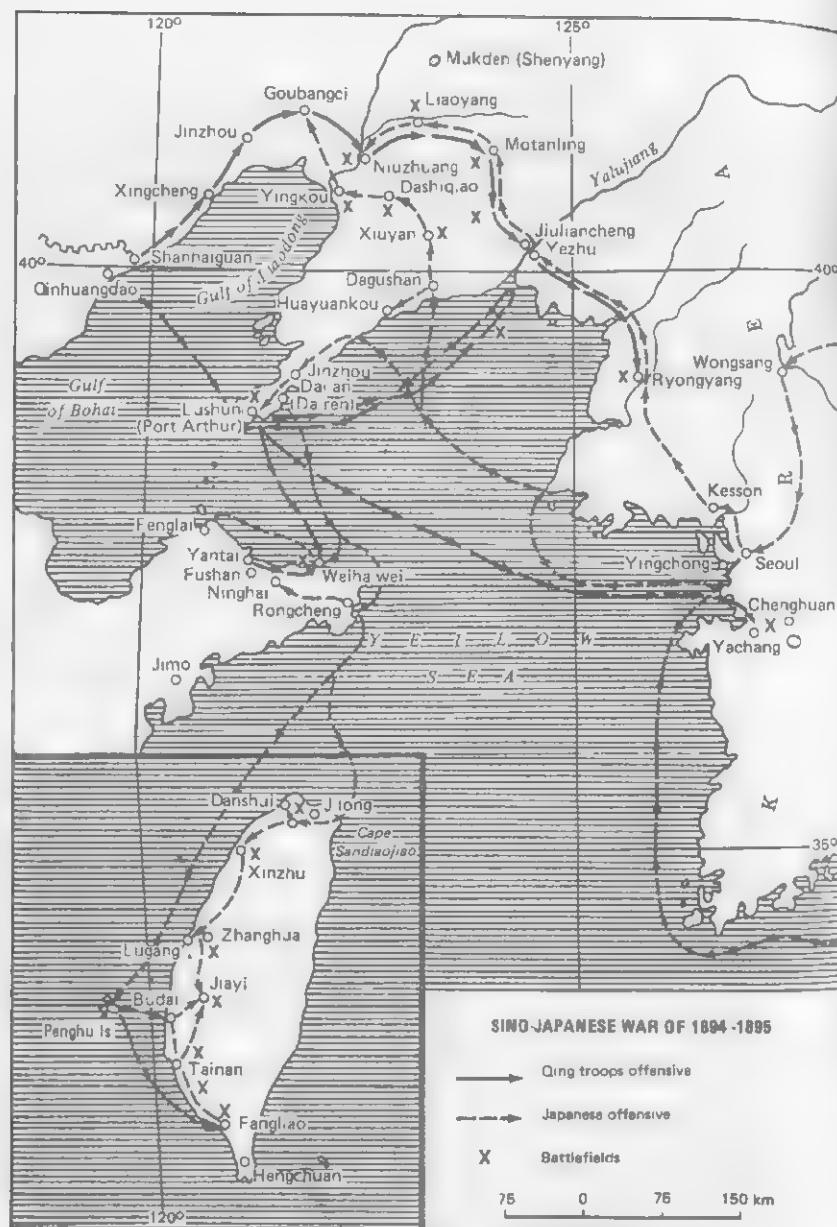
The hostilities soon spread to South Manchuria. On 24 October, the Japanese General Oyama's army of 40,000 landed north-east of Port Arthur on Liaodong peninsula, and on 21 November, after a nearly month-long siege, captured that large fortress and naval base covering the northern approaches to the Gulf of Zhili. Thereupon the Japanese mounted a successful offensive in South Manchuria, crushing Chinese resistance (Map 5).

On 20 January 1895, a 30,000-strong Japanese army under Marshal Kuroda landed east of Weihaiwei on Shandong peninsula, another fortified Chinese naval base covering the southern approaches to the Gulf of Zhili. On 12 February, the base and the remnants of the Chinese fleet surrendered.

It then dawned on Emperor Guangxu that the well-stocked arsenals and impregnable forts that his retinue had told him about were little more than a fiction which concealed the 'squeeze' and thievery that had been going on, and that the guns and material China had been buying abroad were of a low standard. He pounced on Li Hongzhang who, to use the words of Russian minister to China A.P. Kassini, 'had stuck at nothing to round out his already enormous fortune'.⁶⁵ But the 60-year-old empress dowager, who had in effect reclaimed control of state affairs on 29 September 1894, recalled Grand Duke Gong to the Zongli yamen and issued a decree in praise of Li's services to take the edge off Guangxu's order of Li's dismissal.

Still, the defeat of the northern armies and navy shook Li Hongzhang's power. He was stripped of his post of viceroy of Zhili and of imperial superintendent of trade in northern ports. His closest associates—Sheng Xuanhuai, in charge of troop transportation during the war, and Yuan Shikai—were accused of bribery and of stealing army rice, though both succeeded in having the case against them suppressed.

The regionalism and rivalry of the Chinese landlord cliques had a lot to do with China's defeat in the war against Japan. One example



Map 5

is the fact that it never occurred to anyone to send the southern (Nanyang) fleet to aid the northern.

The crushing defeat at the hands of the Japanese, whose armed forces after the Meiji Restoration were on a par with those of the leading capitalist powers, revealed the decay of the Qing regime. The military preparations of Li Hongzhang with the help of German and British advisers proved entirely insufficient. All arms were outdated, and the personnel both physically and morally unprepared. As a rule, soldiers were conscripted lifelong, while for the officers the army was no more than a source of enrichment. A large portion of the funds allocated for arms, fortifications, and troop maintenance was cornered by embezzlers. The army register listed more men and officers by far than there really existed.

The defeat of the Qing armed forces could not have been more complete. Fearing an outburst of popular anger, the throne was anxious to come to terms with Japan. Reinstating Li Hongzhang in his offices, returning all his titles, the court appointed him envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to conduct peace negotiations, which began in Shimonoseki on 19 March 1895. Li pressed for an armistice, eager to halt the advance of Japanese troops in China. The Japanese militarists, on the other hand, wanted to drag out the talks and protract the hostilities in order, among other things, to seize the Pescadore (Penghuliedao) islands and Taiwan. The Japanese plenipotentiary, Count Ito, demanded that China pay an indemnity of 750 million *liang* and cede Dagu, Tianjin and Shanhaiguan. On 24 March Li turned down the demands. That day he was wounded in an assassination attempt by a member of a Japanese ultra-nationalist organisation that wanted the war to continue until the capture of Beijing. The bullet entered Li's left cheek, and he lost use of his left eye. While he was recovering from the wound, the talks were continued by his son, Li Jingfeng, who had for some years been the Qing minister to Tokyo.

True to the Chinese diplomatic principle of 'using barbarians to control barbarians', Li Hongzhang sought the support of other powers to curb the excessive demands of the Japanese. And in this he was partly successful, capitalising on the inter-imperialist rivalries of the mid-1890s. The Japanese eased up: the required indemnity was first reduced from 750 million to 300 million *liang*, and finally to 200 million; the Japanese took back the demand for opening Beijing to foreign trade, and renounced their claim to Mukden. The Treaty of Shimonoseki signed on 17 April 1895, recognised the full independence of Korea from China, but not from Japan. The Pescadores, Taiwan, and Liaodong peninsula with the fortress of Lüshun (Port Arthur), were ceded to the victor. More ports in China's interior were to be opened: Shashi in Hubei province, Chongqing in Sichuan, Suzhou in Jiangsu, and Hangzhou in Zhejiang, with the Japanese

gaining freedom of trade, manufacture, and industry. Under Article 4 of the Treaty, Japanese subjects were permitted to carry on 'all sorts of manufacturing activities in all open points, towns, and ports of China and to ship into China all kinds of machines'.⁶⁶

Tsarist Russia reacted violently. With the support of France and Germany, it exerted pressure on the Japanese government. Though reluctantly, the latter gave in. When ratification instruments were exchanged between Japan and China in Beijing on 8 May 1895, the article on the cession of Liaodong peninsula had been deleted. In exchange, Japan received an additional indemnity of 30 million *liang*.

The Sino-Japanese war ended the 'self-strengthening' policy. Followed by China for 35 years, it had proved ineffective in safeguarding the country's sovereignty or in consolidating the feudal system of the Manchus. The vast empire had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of a relatively small island state that had, unlike its neighbour, carried out bourgeois reforms. In substance, 'self-strengthening' had been carried on at the price of endless concessions to the capitalist powers in order to vitalise the Qing court in its confrontation with the mass of the Chinese people. It had enabled the powers to tighten their stranglehold on China, and had enfeebled centralised government, while augmenting the power and autonomy of regional feudal military cliques, which furthered their selfish localist interests at the expense of the national good.

The chief reason for the defeat of the 'self-strengthening' policy was its reactionary aim of conserving the old social order (though, admittedly, some of the economic developments generated by it did encourage growth of new productive forces, which at once came into collision with the feudal social relations). 'Self-strengthening' had brought about no structural change of the kind that the broad mass of the people would support. Accompanied by submission to Western demands and aggressions, it had to some degree set the stage for the later imperialist division of the country into spheres of influence and zones of interest.

Following the Sino-Japanese war, the policy of 'self-strengthening' was replaced by a reform movement, among whose supporters were a fairly considerable number of highly placed dignitaries of the Qing Empire.

Part III

THE QING EMPIRE: A SEMICOLONY OF THE IMPERIALIST POWERS, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Chapter 8

CHINA'S ECONOMY AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19th CENTURY

In the final three decades of the 19th century, new, primarily external, factors were visibly at work in China's still feudalistic economy. Though the old, medieval Confucian principles were still wholly dominant in sectors that absorbed the bulk of the country's work force, entirely new principles borrowed from abroad or introduced by foreign expansionists, had intruded upon the structure of Chinese tenant farming and bureaucratic feudalism. Spectacular advances in some divisions of the economy were set off by regressive tendencies or stagnation in others.

This combination of constructive and destructive elements was in many ways a consequence of the political upheavals of the preceding period—the opium wars of 1840-1842 and 1856-1860, and the twenty-seven-year-long (1850-1877) succession of peasant wars and insurrections of ethnic minorities. Following the First Opium War, China was plunged into economic chaos created by the importation of opium and the outflow of silver. In the final third of the 19th century, things went from bad to worse: the Qing Empire experienced disastrous dislocation called forth by the peasant war of the Taipings (1850-1864), the rebellion of the Nianjuns (1852-1868), the insurrections of the ethnic minorities (1854-1877), and, chiefly, by the punitive Qing expeditions against the rebels.

Many millions of peasants and artisans had been exterminated. Productive forces were destroyed on an awesome scale. One Russian traveller who saw China in the late 1860s, wrote: 'Wasteland occurs in the heart of the most densely populated provinces, and this owing to a shortage of hands and capital to cultivate it. The roads are in disrepair, the canals silted up, the bridges ruined, and the expensive irrigation systems of most fields completely destroyed.'¹ The gravest damage was done to the urban economy, which is always the most vulnerable to the ravages of war. The government's punitive campaigns played havoc with the urban crafts and with commerce in the

eastern and central provinces, especially Jiangnan. Most of the county and prefectural seats were partially or completely demolished. The landlord Hunan army had totally destroyed Nanjing, where only the city walls survived. Suzhou and Hangzhou were laid waste. Thousands of manufactories and workshops were wrecked or had ceased to exist.

The drastic decline of home trade owing to hostilities, plunder, and requisitions, saw capital being withdrawn from circulation and put into treasure. Merchants and money-lenders in large areas of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui, and also in the central provinces, had suffered painful losses.

This was compounded with dislocation of the transport system, especially in the eastern and central provinces. The countless ferries and junks on the Yangzi, Huanghe, and the Grand Canal had been destroyed or sunk. The roads badly needed repair.

The carnage wreaked by the Manchu-Chinese government troops and the regional armies, especially the Hunan and Huai armies, coupled with the fearful famine of 1876-1879 in the North, had reduced the population of towns and villages. The 18 provinces of China proper, which had numbered nearly 429 million people in 1851, had 380 million in 1882. The suppression of the Taipings alone claimed a toll of nearly 20 million lives.

The greatest devastation was visited on the south of Jiangsu, the north of Zhejiang, the south-east of Henan, on Anhui and the north of Jiangxi, the south of Zhili, and the western regions of Shandong, Gansu, Shenxi, and Yunnan provinces. The village people had either been slain or had died from hunger and other calamities, while the survivors had fled. In some places in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui the population had shrunk to a mere fifth of what it had been before.

This picture of ruin continued well into the 1880s. Irrigation facilities were either destroyed or were falling into disrepair. Most dykes, dams, wells, ditches, and canals were hardly usable. In Jiangsu and Anhui, large tracts of land lay abandoned. The steady stream of settlers from the interior provinces did not restore the destruction until the end of the 1880s, and the devastation inflicted on farming in Yunnan, Gansu, Shenxi, and other south-western and north-western provinces was not made good until the 1890s, and this only in part.

Migration of peasants from interior regions to the war-ravaged eastern provinces, led to a proliferation of peasant holdings (those of local farmers—*bendi* and of settlers from other parts—*kejia*). A sizeable proportion of households, however, was still in landlord bondage (*fushen*, *dahu*, *tuba*). In 1858, at the height of the peasant war, the Qing were forced by the circumstances to permit Chinese of the male sex to settle in the Manchurian provinces of Jilin and

Heilongjiang heretofore restricted to Manchus and descendants of Chinese who had served the Manchus before and during the conquest of China. The new settlers were denied the right of buying land, this ban lasting until 1878, when Chinese of the female sex, too, were allowed to come. In 1880, a Bureau of Colonisation was formed to supervise Chinese settlement of the then sparsely inhabited and undeveloped Manchuria, where vast tracts of land lay unoccupied and unworked.

The popular movements of the 1850s into the 1870s had in some regions greatly fortified peasant landownership. This was accompanied by a visible decline in the area of crown lands (*guantian*). In 1853, the ban was lifted on sale and purchase of 'banner' lands (*qidi*), with the latter and the fields of military settlements (*tuntian*), 'public' plots of land (*gongtian*), and the like, falling more and more into private hands. Growth of private holdings (*mintian*) and consolidation of private property in land became a dominant tendency. But the process was still compounded with residual practices of olden days. As before, sold land could be redeemable (*huomai*) or unredeemable (*dumai*, *juemai*), that is, sold in perpetuity. And a 'perpetual lease' could apply to either the upper layer of soil exclusively (*tianmian*) or to the land whole, that is, the lower layer as well (*tiandi*).*

The post-civil war dislocation of the 1860s, 70s and 80s naturally affected the technical side of farming. Exhaustion and disaggregation of the upper soil layer of larger and larger areas saw productivity decline. Harvests dropped in most provinces, including China's 'grain belt'—the provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Anhui, and this in the case of the autumn crop, the main one, as well as the summer crop. The food problem grew. Meanwhile, the peasant's backward techniques complicated development of virgin and long idle land. The imperfections of the large irrigation structures built in the Middle Ages, too, made themselves felt. Dykes, dams, canals, and creeks were in bad need of repair and were less and less effective for irrigation and as protection against natural calamities, especially in the valleys of the Yangzi, Huaihe, and Huanghe. Famines hit now one now another province in quick succession. Droughts and floods devastated entire regions. The third quarter of the 19th century saw a reduction of worked land, and the crisis continued here and there well into the final quarter of the century. Land under crop did not, in effect, expand—save in Manchuria—in 20 years (1873-1893). Yet the 1880s and 90s saw an increase in population. At the turn of the century, indeed, it was past the 428 million mark,

* Under the old law, the upper layer of soil was in the possession of the 'perpetual' tenant, whereas the lower belonged to the owner of the holding.

with 410 million (by 1897) living in the 18 provinces of China proper. With this agrarian overpopulation, more and more ruined peasants joined the mass of homeless vagabonds (*liumang*, *liumin*). Pauperisation went on apace in villages.

The critical dislocations of the post-civil war period were compounded with external factors. China's association with the world market and the flow of imported goods changed the pattern of local pre-factory-type development. The iniquities imposed in the treaties that climaxed the opium wars added to the burdens and injustices of the tax system, the unequal taxation of domestic and foreign goods, the surviving medieval system of monopoly patents, and so on. The home market, narrow as it was owing to the near absolute predominance of peasants and the low purchasing power of the mass of the people, was being imposed upon by foreign-made factory goods, especially in urban areas, with the result that artisan production declined.

Furthermore, the world demand for some of the farm products, such as raw silk and cotton, deprived artisans of raw materials. Cotton processing, metal making and metalworking were areas that suffered most from the effects of import. In other fields, too, foreign competition depressed the competitive capacity of Chinese produce in both the external (e.g. tea) and home (sugar, coal, etc.) markets. (The growth of certain export fields, above all silk and tea processing, and soybean oil and cake making, was due chiefly to China's temporary monopoly on these goods—until the 1890s for tea, and until the turn of the century for silk). From the end of the 19th century on, the low quality and high cost of Chinese tea saw it lose ground in competition against Indian and Ceylon tea, and Chinese silk against Japanese. Metallurgy and metalworking were in sad straits. The inflow of cheaper factory-made foreign goods had a destructive effect on such fields as sugar refining, dye making, hardware, and so on. But the most painful blow of all was suffered by the leading Chinese manual industry—cotton processing, which went on mostly in villages, involving peasant labour, and was insubstantial in urban areas.

The ravages were caused less by the importation of finished factory-made fabrics, and chiefly by imports of machine-made yarn. Following the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, foreign-made yarn flowed unhindered to the textile markets of one province after another. Until the turn of the century, indeed, yarn made in colonial India held nearly complete sway in the China market.

In the case of fabrics, on the other hand, Western trade expansion encountered serious resistance, and this despite the far cheaper price of foreign-made cotton prints as compared with that of the

local hand-made varieties. The main obstacle to the spread of the imported article was the economic structure of Chinese society, which combined small-scale crop farming with domestic industry. Chinese weavers, especially in villages, did not heed the amount of labour they expended, just so as to retain the meagre earnings that their work yielded them. Hence the slow advance made by factory-made imported fabrics in conquering the China market.

When the northern seaboard and, chiefly, the basin of the Yangzi were opened to foreign trade in the 1860s and 1870s, foreign textiles gained access to all provinces. The middle and lower strata of people began wearing clothes cut from fabrics made of machine-manufactured yarn. Factory-made prints, too, came into use, but to a far less degree. In twenty years, from 1872 to 1892, yarn imports increased 25-fold, whereas imports of fabrics rose by only 37 per cent. (From 1873 to 1899, the inflow of foreign-made yarn grew 40-fold.)

In South and South-West China, peasants and urban artisans gradually gave up spinning. They bought machine-made yarn and produced fabrics for sale. The divorce of spinning from weaving gained in scale. From the 1890s on, it also spread to North China. This intensive process lent an ever greater commercial complexion to textile making in Guangdong, Jiangsu, Hubei, and other provinces. Artisan weaving of machine-made yarn spread rapidly to other regions—Guangxi, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

This massive turn to imported yarn in the maritime, south-western, and some central provinces wrought great changes in China's economy, though in northern provinces domestic spinning was still dominant at the close of the century.

The evolution of China's pre-manufacture and manufacture industries in the latter half of the 19th century made any further growth of the productive forces in the framework of pre-capitalist relations quite inconceivable. There was a visible growth of the lower forms of capitalism (domestic industry, workshop, manufactory) in cotton and silk weaving, oil refining, and tea processing. The social and economic development of export industries was ahead of industries exposed to the destructive or restrictive effects of foreign imports. This lowered investors' interest in the latter. Silk processing, a field in which merchant capital showed great enterprise, grew into the most advanced export industry. A most destructive obstacle to growth of manufacturing were the *changguanshui* and *lijin* internal customs duties, which were exacted several times over as goods were carted past numerous customs posts along the route to the market. The *lijin* and the export duty for tea, for example, amounted to some 25 per cent the market price, the duty on sugar to 18 per cent, and cotton and silk fabrics to 16 per cent. The underdeveloped system of credits, coupled with high interest rates (30 per cent and

higher) created additional obstacles to private enterprise. Traders and owners of workshops and manufactories were bedevilled by the various forms of 'squeeze' they had to pay and by bureaucratic abuses. Manual industry was not yet a dependable sphere of profitable and sure investment. The small scale of most of the workshops and manufactories, their continuous financial difficulties, their dependence on the ups and downs of the market, and frequent ruin were evidence of the weakness of Chinese industrial capital. Furthermore, technical innovation made slow and painful headway. As a result, at the close of the 19th century nearly all 'artisan houses' (*jihu*), and many workshops and manufactories as well, had equipment that was backward even by the standards of the early capitalist manufactory period.

In the latter half of the 19th century, completely new heretofore unseen industries appeared on the China scene, such as factories, steamship lines, and railways. They were foreign to the system of feudal land tenure and bureaucracy. The introduction of these alien forms of technology and production found the traditional Chinese economy clearly unprepared. The post-opium wars and post-Taiping crisis gripped the still medieval country badly afflicted by the consequences of long self-isolation with stultifying ferocity. The post-opium-wars China remained an agrarian land, though with fairly productive farming by medieval standards. The Qing society of the 1870s was weighed down by long outdated Confucian traditions, medieval superstructural institutions, and antediluvian social and economic relations. The hierarchy of estates survived unaltered, consisting of the uppermost 'banner' estate (*qiren*),* and the four indigenously Chinese estates (*shi*, *nong*, *gong*, and *shang*).

The predilection shown to 'scholars' (*shi*, *shenshi*) and tillers (*nong*) to the detriment of the urban estates, the *gong* artisans and *shang* merchants, was largely a reflection of the economic superiority of farming to crafts and manufacturing—a fact that is typical of nearly all pre-capitalist societies. This pattern of things was enshrined by the state's traditional economic doctrine that 'farming is the trunk, while trade and crafts are but branches'. 'Strengthen the trunk, shorten the branches' and 'make people go into farming' were mottos which sanctified the oppression and plunder visited on the towns. The consequences of this doctrine were still in evidence in the late 19th century. In the Chinese economic fabric the town was subordinate to the village, technology backward, and merchants and entrepreneurs lacking strength and influence.

The country's forcible inclusion in the colonial system and the

* Consisting of Manchus, 'banner' Mongols, and *hanjuns*, that is, Chinese attached to one of the 'banners' or corps

world market, the growth of capitalism in the bosom of the old system, and the burgeoning of various transitional forms had a telling effect on the lives of many millions of peasants, artisans and traders, and precipitated the ultimate crisis of feudalism.

Following the breakdown of China's isolation occasioned by the opium wars and owing to the economic disarray in the wake of the Taiping peasant war, a variety of positive and negative phenomena came to the surface, serving to show that the former medieval stability was no more. Symptoms of crisis were plentiful by the end of the 19th century. The decrease in the number of draught animals, the decline in soil fertility, the drop in the productivity of crop farming, and the absence of growth of cultivated land were clear evidence of stagnation in an economic area crucial for overpopulated China. What made matters still worse was the neglect of irrigation works, the disrepair of hydrotechnical structures, and the consequently disastrous effects on farming of natural calamities. This evidence of crisis was augmented by a set of new developments, such as the progressive disintegration of the medieval forms of bureaucratic landownership; abolition of Manchuria's special status and its colonisation by Chinese, and also the migration of peasants to the marginal regions of the empire. With the country joining the world market and with commodity-money relations spreading to the countryside the gradual conversion of crop farming into a type of commercial enterprise disrupted the medieval immobility of China's rural society.

The cumulative effect of these long-term factors as the country was being dragged into the capitalist world system and as capitalist forms of large-scale factory production were gaining a firmer and firmer foothold, heralded change in the stage-by-stage development of Chinese feudalism and, therefore, the beginning of its end. No longer did the mounting social antagonisms and the increasing pauperisation of the mass of the people, coupled with economic dislocation, act as the determining factors. They had occurred again and again in China's long history, and were invariably remedied in due course by the hard work of several generations. No, the substance of the crisis in the latter half of the 19th century was essentially different. The complex of factors that generated the crisis, both the negative and the positive, had not existed either in the 18th or the early half of the 19th century. The post-opium-wars and post-Taiping crisis of feudalism had an entirely different historical background. For one thing, the country had to contend with the foreign colonial scramble, amounting to undisguised and unmitigated plunder by the socially and economically more developed Western societies in a setting of burgeoning capitalist structures. The impact of this external factor, which was forcibly modifying the historically

conditioned pattern of Chinese traditional society, created all the landmarks of a radical structural crisis. Chinese feudal land tenure and bureaucracy were reduced to a state of adversity in which the potential for stage-by-stage growth dwindled to nought. In short, the new historical climate made irreversible the components of a crisis that in other circumstances could have been said to be usual for the Confucian medieval environment.

The question of a radical change of form, of social system, did not arise until the mid-19th century, for until then society was still intrinsically balanced. Feudalism had not yet spent its inner capacity for survival when conditions 'natural' for capitalism were imposed upon it by the West, pushing it to gradual decline and erosion. In China before the opium wars the intrinsic stability and regimentation were, in fact, leading in the other direction—inhibiting any movement from stage to stage, and putting off the prospect of a change of systems. The weakness of the structures that could have paved the road to capitalist development had in many ways made the spontaneous bourgeois modernisation of the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries quite unviable. The difficulty of working the new, imported social and economic structures into the traditional economic fabric was due to this very reason. Indeed, the fact that the very environment of the radical crisis of feudalism was brought in from outside, shows that Marx's description of the capitalist invasion of Asia as a 'social revolution'² is entirely appropriate for the China of the latter half of the 19th and of the early 20th century.

The intensive foreign economic expansion, on the one hand, and the changes in the Qing's economic policy, on the other, created a special climate for the initial stage of China's modernisation. The continually growing foreign sector was a component of the crisis and, indeed, an important factor in the life of the Qing Empire, a source of new economic structures. Its influence was strong in many fields of the economy, and first of all in foreign and home trade. Commercial expansion and shipment of goods out of China were the key aspects determining the policy of the powers right up to the end of the 19th century. The system of unequal treaties and the semi-colonial exploitation of the Qing Empire pandered to the commercial interests of primarily the British bourgeoisie. Foreigners had won the right of free travel for purposes of trade in the key economic regions of the country. The powers won exceptionally low tariffs on goods brought into the country, amounting for most items to no more than 5 per cent of their value. Foreign traders were exempted from paying the manifold internal duties (*changguanshui* and *lijin*) levied on locally made commodities. In the period from 1873 to 1893 export duties for Chinese goods were nearly double the duties on imports. The fixed import duties were revisable but once in ten years, and this

only with the consent and under the control of foreign consular officials. The Qing government was denied the right to set its own scale of import and export tariffs. Low customs duties opened wide the door to China for European, Japanese, and American goods.

In 1859, the British, with French and U.S. support, had seized control of the Inspectorate of Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Robert Hart, a Briton, was made Inspector-General of Customs, and retained the post for 46 consecutive years (1863-1909), exercising complete control of the customs service. Conversely, the Qing government had practically no say in the matter of customs policy, which, for obvious reasons, was an effective tool of China's economic enslavement by the powers.

A foreign inspector, usually a Briton, was put in charge of the customs services in each of the treaty ports. By 1898, such customs control was established in 33 ports. Not only did the revenue pass through the hands of Hart and his colleagues, but was also deposited in foreign banks, chiefly British.

The privileges wrested by the powers from the Qing government under the treaties of 1842-1860 were highly favourable for foreign commercial and industrial enterprise. In the treaty ports foreigners won the right to establish any commercial firms they wished. By 1897, the number of such firms rose to 595, with 374 of them British. The leaders in the field were Jardine, Matheson and Co. and Russell and Co., which initially had had a finger in the opium trade. Jardine, Matheson and Co. owned or controlled a large number of industrial, transport, and insurance enterprises, and other firms, too, had their tentacles stretched far into the interior of the country, pocketing huge profits from the export of industrial crops and of the produce of rural and urban craftsmen. The foreign companies operated through a network of agents—Chinese procurers and middlemen who purchased what peasants and artisans had produced.

This was the soil that gave birth to wealthy Chinese middlemen and merchants, the compradores, who became the allies and tools of foreign expansion. Exploiting and modifying the society under the Qing regime, foreign capital planted the seeds of full-blown capitalism and, indeed, created the requisite social environment for the normal functioning of the foreign sector of the economy and for its contacts with the world of local business. Owing to the drastic disparity and obvious incommunicability between the foreign capitalists and the local pre-capitalist corporative milieu, both needed compradores, a special institution to mediate between them.

The compradores were an institution that mediated the adjustment of the foreign sector to the traditional local economic system, on the one hand, and the adjustment of local merchant and usury capital to world trade, on the other. As a result, the compradores

represented the first phase in the emergence of a modern class of entrepreneurs in China. Though they were no farther advanced in origin than the manufactory or even the pre-manufactory stage, they were the first elitist group of the Chinese bourgeoisie, the basic body of the early, 'compradore', period (1840s to 1870s) in which that social class began to constitute itself. The compradores were a necessary institution, a kind of 'primary school' for national capitalism in a setting where commerce, especially import and export, spawned by the internationalisation of China's economy, reigned supreme.

China's development as a part of the world market, which began in the mid-19th century, was gradual, in step with the opening of successive parts of the country to foreign trade. After the First Opium War (1840-1842) it concerned the southern regions—Guangdong, Fujian and Guangxi, which were the first to be 'opened' to foreign trade. In the 1850s and 60s the eastern maritime provinces, too, gradually became a market for foreign goods, including Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui. That was when the centre of foreign trade shifted north from Guangzhou to Shanghai. Since the 1860s, the north of the country—Zhili and Shandong—and since the 70s the Yangzi valley—Hubei, Jiangxi and Hunan—were opened to foreign commerce. In the 1880s, the world market engulfed the south-western provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou, and in the 90s came the turn of Manchuria. By the beginning of the 20th century, all in the least economically important regions of China proper were linked with the world market. As many as 42 sea and river ports, and cities in the interior, had been opened to foreign trade between 1843 and 1899. They included the big commercial and manufacturing centres: Guangzhou, Amoy, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Tianjin, Shantou, Zhenjiang, Hankou, Wuhu, Jiujiang, Shanghai, Niuzhuang, Wenzhou, and Chongqing. Foreign shipping bound China tighter and tighter to the world market. The growth of commercial lines—chiefly coastwise and river navigation—did not essentially begin until after the Second Opium War (1856-1860), but by 1895 some twenty foreign steamship companies, half of them British, had been founded in Shanghai and Hong Kong. Dominant among them were the British-owned Butterfield and Swire lines, and Jardine, Matheson and Co., whose ships plied the China coast and the Yangzi.

Between 1864 and 1899 the volume of China's foreign trade increased in cash terms by nearly 250 per cent. The list of imports was a graphic illustration of the empire's becoming a market for foreign consumer industries. Ever since the opium wars, the British Empire (chiefly the British Isles, Hong Kong, and India) topped the roll. In 1894, for example, it accounted for nearly eight-tenths of China's imports and for more than half its exports. Indian opium and

cotton yarn and fabrics gave it undisputed first place in the imports field, to which ought to be added the predominance of the British merchant fleet carrying the bulk of export and import cargoes. Since the 1880s, a special part in China's foreign trade was played by Hong Kong, which had grown into a large centre of legitimate trade and international smuggling. In 1894, indeed, nearly half of China's foreign commerce went through Hong Kong. In effect, the foreign trade of the Qing Empire was in the hands of British companies. The devaluation of the Chinese specie, the silver *liang*, which began in the 1830s, augmented the high profits reaped by the foreign traders: the advantages of non-equivalent trade were compounded with profits they derived from the disarray in the empire's monetary system.

Foreign banks forged into prominence in the 'open' ports towards the end of the 19th century. Gradually, they grew into one of the mightiest motors of Western economic expansion. Branches and affiliates of leading British banks began springing up in 1848. In 1864, a group of Hong Kong entrepreneurs closely connected with major interests in the metropolitan country, founded the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, which became the chief financial instrument of British imperialism in China. By the mid-1890s, banks of other nationalities opened their doors, but the British continued to hold sway in the foreign sector's financial affairs. Already by the end of the century, the bulk of silver flowing to and from China was handled by Western banks. They engaged extensively in speculation, taking advantage of the difference in the price of silver in the country's interior and in the world market.

The outflow of silver abroad in the mid-century, when the Chinese monetary market was still undeveloped, compelled the Qing to seek foreign loans. By 1894, they had obtained a large series of loans, chiefly from the British, and chiefly for Beijing's military and administrative needs. Since 1874, the loans were nearly all covered by customs revenue. So, by the turn of the 20th century, the Qing had repaid them. China's foreign loans made prior to the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 were, indeed, relatively modest, adding up to no more than 40 million *liang*, and were not usually intended for any special economic or political purpose.

When the imperialist era began, export of capital to China gradually became the chief tool of foreign economic expansion, pushing export of goods, though it was growing, to the background. Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, the low price of raw materials, land, and labour, coupled with the high rate of profit and the high interest rate, made the Qing Empire a lucrative field for foreign investment. Western capital poured into light industries, chiefly textiles, into mining, transport, communications, and so on. Indirect investment in the shape of loans, too,

began playing a new role, being the chief economic weapon in the scramble for the biggest piece of the Chinese pie—for 'spheres of influence', markets, and sources of raw material. In this setting, foreign banks grew into an economic power exerting imperialist pressure on China. Great prominence in the battle for China's division into 'spheres of influence' witnessed in the late 1890s was gained by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Yokohama Specie Bank, the French Banque de l'Indochine, the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank, and the Russo-Chinese Bank. Export of capital to China after the Sino-Japanese war was, indeed, a leading factor in the direct interference of the powers in the country's internal affairs. It served as a lever of foreign control over the throne's revenue in general, spurred outright seizures of Chinese territory, and secured special economic and political privileges. Between 1895 and 1898, the Qing government found itself saddled with seven loans totalling 370 million *liang* (a sum nine times that of all the loans prior to 1895), contracted to cover military expenditures, to pay indemnities, and so on.

Foreign banks became the nerve centre of railway construction. They financed building and the requisite shipments of material and equipment, and once the railways were built they controlled their exploitation and incomes. Through their banks, the foreign powers imposed seven railway loans on China between 1887 and 1900, at a stage in Western economic expansion that has come to be known as the Battle of the Concessions.

The rival powers sought to win concessions for railway construction, because in addition to the promise of high profit such construction reinforced them in their 'spheres of influence', and offered additional opportunities to capitalise on the region's wealth. In 1896-1898, much against its will, China was forced to let foreign companies build as many as 19 railway lines.

Following the First Opium War, foreign industrial enterprises had mushroomed in the foreign settlements and 'open' ports—chiefly shipyards, food and other consumer industries, silk spinneries, and tea factories. Between 1843 and 1894, as many as 101 foreign enterprises were established, out of which two-thirds were British, and more than half were based in Shanghai. They were mainly medium-size and large factories by the standards of those days.

Following mergers and purchases of smaller ship's repair works, the docks in Hong Kong and on the Huangpu, like the Shanghai shipyards, forged into a place of leadership. Jardine, Matheson and Co. reached the height of its power. In 1875, it built China's first railway from Shanghai to Wusong, which was then redeemed and dismantled by the authorities under pressure of extreme conservative elements.

Foreign entrepreneurship was given special encouragement by the

Treaty of Shimonoseki, under which foreigners obtained practically unlimited rights to building industrial, mining, and transport enterprises, their output exempted from any internal duties outside the settlements and leased territories. Their number grew swiftly after 1895, and for the first time they included mines and quarries. The foreign sector gained a stranglehold on the textile industry.

Machine production, initiated at foreign-owned factories in the 'open' ports, began to spread on Chinese soil before the manufactory stage had run out its course. As a result, the processes of the manufactory as well as machine stage co-existed. But their influence on each other was minimal. The purely economic demands in the mid-19th century Qing Empire had not yet created the historical need for machine industry. What is more, the objective conditions, above all the marked superiority of farming over crafts on the plane of labour productivity, coupled with the giant pressure of surplus labour power on the implements of labour and the consequent extremely slow evolution of technology, blotted out the possibility—for at least the next few decades—of any natural passage from manufactory to factory. But the intervention in the natural course of this unpromising evolution by so powerful an agent as the state, changed matters drastically.

The situation in mid-19th-century China compelled the state, which had for ages itself retarded the pace of social-economic processes in the country, to go into action. One compulsive reason, the chronologically first, was the disgrace the state had incurred through its military defeats in the opium wars against Britain and France. The second reason, and certainly the immeasurably more important, was the inability of the Manchus to suppress the Taipings, which brought Qing rule to the edge of collapse. The regime and the traditional system as a whole had to be strengthened. Modern means were required to fight internal and external enemies. The essential thing was to build a munitions industry. And for this, the state had to intervene in economic development. In the 1860s and 70s, this grew imperative. If the state evaded the imperative, the Qing would face almost certain collapse.

The economic dislocation and the lessons of the Taiping peasant war and the opium wars, coupled with the lurking dangers to what remained of China's national independence, led to a change of heart in the Manchu court and among the leaders above all of the Huai (Li Hongzhang) and Hunan (Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang) feudal military-bureaucratic cliques. No longer did they oppose machines in principle, only monopoly use of machines by foreigners. The Qing Dragon Throne was appalled by the expansion of British and other foreign capital in China, which necessitated 'self-strengthening' (*zhiqiang*) and construction of a 'native' factory industry. Still, the

Manchu government retained the traditional distaste for entrepreneurship as the antipode of the traditional Confucian principles. With capitalism the reactionaries associated foreign expansion in China and the dangers to the existing order of things. That is why, subjectively, the policy of 'self-strengthening' that began in 1861 with the Tongzhi era and was wiped off the slate by the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, reposed not on acceptance of entrepreneurship but, conversely, on a dread of it. The moving spirits of 'self-strengthening' wanted to have the machines that were absolutely essential to produce modern arms, but wanted them without capitalism.

This half-hearted entrepreneurship 'modelled on foreign lines', however, was enough to excite fears and opposition among the conservative Manchu-Chinese palace camarilla, which could not stomach innovation and feared any strengthening of the national Chinese landlord groups of Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan. The Beijing-Tianjin telegraph line, the first in the country, was repeatedly attacked by the staff of the former imperial courier service, who had lost their livelihood through it. The reactionary palace clique obstructed the construction of the Tangshan-Tianjin railway, and in 1888, when it was finally built, refused to have it extended to Beijing. The conservative Manchu group of the Empress Dowager Cixi, which stood at the helm of power, sought to keep everything associated with the adoption of foreign techniques as far away as possible from the imperial capital. The rails of the Shanghai-Wusong railway, the first railway in China, which had been dismantled in 1877, were shipped to Taiwan and used there. Due to this fear of having foreign machines in Qing China, the armies got their modern arms—warships, guns, and rifles—from abroad. Yet fearing complete dependence on the 'overseas barbarians' in this respect, the Manchu elite agreed, even as the Taiping peasant war was still on, to build government arsenals and shipyards. This started and shaped the peculiar quality of the national factory industry.

Local factory industry—government munitions plants—appeared first in the early 1860s. Privately run factories did not spring up until the late 70s, that is, some twenty years later than the first foreign-run industrial enterprises. And throughout the rest of the 19th century national industry developed in two guises—government and private—with a variety of intermediate, transitional, and mixed forms. The founders of nearly all munitions factories, arsenals, and workshops were highly-placed dignitaries, viceroys, and provincial governors, who sought salvation for the Qing Empire in 'foreign matters', 'barbarian matters', or 'self-strengthening', that is, in building a strong army and navy to buttress the power of the military-bureaucratic cliques they represented in order to sustain the existing order.

The difficulty of suppressing the rebellions of Taipings, Nianjuns, and non-Han minorities, and the related needs of the Qing troops, especially the armies of Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Zuo Zongtang, spurred construction of a war industry, and this construction was at its most intensive precisely at the time of the punitive operations against popular movements and minority insurrections, that is, in 1861-1872. In this period, eleven arsenals and factories were established. The military situation was responsible for the fact that the commanders of the Hunan and Huai armies—who were leaders of provincial Chinese feudal landlord and bureaucratic cliques—were the moving spirits behind these government enterprises. In their wake, viceroys and governors of various other provinces, too, began building large and small arsenals. Some members of the imperial court also became involved.

All in all, 19 government munitions factories were built from 1861 to 1894, six of which were subsequently closed or merged with other factories. The biggest operating projects were the Jiangnan Arsenal and the shipyards of the Fuzhou Shipping Administration. The Qing government's claim to ownership of these enterprises was purely nominal. The factories were controlled by the dignitary who had built them or by the viceroy of the province, usually belonging to either the Huai (or Anhui) group of Li Hongzhang or the Hunan (or Xiang) group of Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang.

Each of these Chinese military-bureaucratic cliques was out to supply its own armies with modern firearms, equipment, and steamships in order to retain, even widen, the territory under its military, political, economic, and financial control. The building of munitions factories, arsenals, and workshops was financed out of the tax revenue of the province concerned. Mostly, foreign engineers were employed to run the technology, though some plants managed without them. And since the main emphasis was on arming troops, the war plants had practically no hand in supplying machinery to other industries.

Whatever was produced by the munitions factories was neither marketable nor marketed, and their development, therefore, was practically unaffected by the current state of the market. This spared them from the destructive effects of foreign competition, but was also responsible for their intrinsic weaknesses—absence of economic efficiency, complete dependence on the state of the treasury, and so on. The work force consisted of legally free wage labourers. Still, their hire retained some of its old, traditional features: recruitment and payment through 'foremen', restrictive guild regulations, a nearly twenty-hour working day, and complete denial of rights. Among the workers were many demobilised soldiers. On the whole, the war industry was an extremely intricate and intrinsically conflicting

body—a specific intermediate organism that was gradually turning capitalist. The treasury granted the arsenals huge allocations. All the same, production was irregular, the quality of what they made was low, and the range of products they turned out limited. Only four of the biggest arsenals could make field guns. The others were chiefly engaged in making gunpowder, shells, and cartridges. The productivity of labour was low. Most of the officials appointed to supervise them wallowed in 'squeeze' and bribery, and astonished the foreigners they met with their utter ignorance of their business.

In addition to re-arming troops and building a steam-powered navy, the 'self-strengthening' policy was also directed to modernising the monetary system. Adopting 'foreign matters', the government carried through a money reform. In 1889, China renounced the copper *qian* and instituted coins modelled on Western lines and made by Western methods. Chiefly, the reform consisted in a new monetary system based on the Mexican silver dollar. One Chinese dollar (*yuan*) was worth 100 cents (*fen*), and 10 cents made a *jiao*, while a *fen* (cent) equalled 10 *qian*. The one- and two-cent coins were copper, while the rest, from 5 cents up to a *yuan* were silver. But the old *qian* continued to circulate, and the imperial mints continued minting them until 1908, but now by coining rather than the old method of casting.

The effects of the 'self-strengthening' policy extended beyond the purely governmental sphere. The growth of this peculiarly mixed official-private entrepreneurship spurred leaders of the Huai, Hunan, and palace cliques and their retinues to initiatives of their own. In the 1870s, they began dabbling in capitalist-type enterprise, and this in civilian industry, with the profit motive as a goad. Treasury funds were called in to build factories making commodities for the market. Though new munitions factories were still going up—the Hubei Arsenal (1890) being the biggest project—the general growth rate of the war industry was declining, while use of machines in civilian fields, where Chinese private capital was coming into its own, increased. Mining with the employment of various machinery, first launched as an appendage of munitions works, began developing as an industry in its own rights in the 1880s. Mines and quarries sold their output and gained a profit, and thereby attracted private capital. The mixed state-private mines became profit-making capitalist-style undertakings. Most of the mixed enterprises belonged to the two rival economic groups of the two most powerful dignitaries—Li Hongzhang, leader of the northern (Beiyang) and Zhang Zhidong, leader of the southern Chinese regional cliques. In fact, they formed what could be described as 'regional empires'.

In his capacity of viceroy of Liangguang, Zhang Zhidong engaged in mining, then in 1891 launched the construction of an iron works

in Hanyang. It was augured to become the biggest in China. High-quality iron ore was mined for it in Daye, and the coal at Maanshan and later Pingxiang. But the huge works operated at a loss despite fine equipment and various official privileges. The price of Hanyang iron was double that of imported metal owing to the poor quality and shortage of coal, the high cost of transporting ore, and various other reasons. In 1894, the iron works suspended operations because of financial difficulties, and in 1896 was transformed into a mixed enterprise headed by the prominent mandarin and entrepreneur Sheng Xuanhuai, who was a member of the Beiyang clique. Sheng had once been Li Hongzhang's secretary and—with the protection of his patron—had made a swift career in 'government supervision and merchant operation' mixed industry, being appointed director of enterprises of which he was also a shareholder.

As we have seen, the war industry, and partly mining, had come into being as a reaction to defeat in the two opium wars and, especially, to the peasant war and the insurrections of non-Han minorities that had brought the Qing dynasty to the brink of disaster. The early Chinese cotton mills (the one in Shanghai and others), on the other hand, owe their origin to quite a different reason: first, the profit lust of the regional cliques, and second, the compulsion to compete against foreign imports and regain the national textile market. The mixed enterprises in civilian industries were mostly large undertakings (the Hanyang iron works employed 3,000 workers, and the Hubei Weaving Bureau just as many) using wage labour and marketing their product. But here, too, the essentially redundant 'supervision' by officials survived and gave rise to corruption and 'squeeze'. A large percentage of the workers, as before, were men released from the army.

By and large, this military and civilian form of 'government-supervised' industry was an early and warped form of state capitalism. Despite its backwardness and its built-in contradictions, and given the survival of traditional monopoly patents, and the like, this artificially conceived state capitalism, an option forcibly imposed by the circumstances of the times, paved the way for the emergence of the somewhat higher form, that of mixed entrepreneurship financed partly by private interests. The first thirty-odd years of mechanised industry (1862-1894) saw the first stage succeeded by the next. In the first stage (1862-1881) chiefly war industries were built, and in the next thirteen years (1882-1894) private enterprises under the supervision of the treasury (*guandu shangban*). During the latter stage, the Qing government imposed on the burgeoning local bourgeoisie a pattern of private enterprise that was subjected to close bureaucratic supervision by officials associated with the local regional military-bureaucratic cliques. Apart from its purely political aspect,

supervision placed the capital of the bourgeoisie at the disposal of members of regional cliques, who also pocketed part of the profits, as this was conceived by the official policy of 'attaining wealth' (*quifu, zhifu*).

For these reasons, despite a few private factories opening and operating at their own risk in the 1870s, in the 'self-strengthening' era most private investment went into all sorts of mixed enterprises. Independent private enterprise was looked down upon both by the metropolitan and the regional authorities. Like the imperial Manchu elite, Li Hongzhang opposed purely private industrial enterprise, which he saw as a threat to the prevailing regime. Constant supervision by officials was to neutralise the danger.

The *guandu shangban* mode of operation was not really a novelty. Similar things had existed in China before in the shape of monopoly patents granted by the treasury to private persons under control of specially-appointed officials. The specific feature of the 1880s and 90s was, however, that Chinese private capital had itself gravitated to 'official supervision, merchant operation', which reduced to the minimum the chances of ruin and provided for at least a modicum of legal protection. The most widespread were mixed enterprises in which high dignitaries—provincial viceroys or governors—held shares, for this protected them from the abuses of local middle and low echelon officials. Besides, high dignitaries were never remiss in obtaining various privileges, including monopoly rights, for their factories and mines.

Mixed enterprises were of two kinds—the *guandu shangban* (merchant enterprise under official control) wholly subject to official supervision, and *guanshang heban* (joint enterprise of officials and merchants) where the bureaucracy had less say.

In 1872, in Shanghai, Li Hongzhang founded the first such mixed enterprise, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, followed, owing to its need for coal, by the Kaiping Mining Company, founded with Li Hongzhang's backing in 1877-1878 to work the coal deposits at Kaiping by mechanised means. Through Li's intervention, the mine was permitted to lay a railway track (initially for horsedrawn carriages and later for steam locomotion). The ample supply of coal and the appearance of a railway, stimulated construction of cement factories in Tangshan.

Mixed enterprises sprang up also outside the domains of Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong. But their spread was far slower. Still, slowly but surely machines began to be used in gold, copper, lead, tin, and silver mining.

Indeed, mixed enterprises were the biggest enterprises that operated in China. The assets of the companies in Kaiping, Mohe, and Qingxi, of the Shanghai Cotton Mill and the Hubei Weaving Bureau,

amounted to some 6 million *liang*, with half of this belonging to private interests. The treasury was pleased with this entrepreneurship under the control, and mostly under the complete sway, of imperial officials. Private shareholders, on the other hand, though pleased to have government protection, were eager to supervise and run the enterprises on their own. They chafed under the excessive prerogatives of the bureaucracy. The director (*duban, zongban*), his deputy, the manager, and members of the board, who were officials and *shenshi*, kept a tight hold on everything. Furthermore, 'self-strengthening' leaders found helpers not only among officials of the civil service. They were also closely associated with the compradores, who were trusted agents of the biggest foreign firms, while also building their private fortunes in commerce as middlemen. Li and Zhang picked managers and administrators for their enterprises from their own milieu, and promptly showered them with high ranks and titles. Nor did they hesitate to provide favourable conditions for the commerce and independent enterprise of compradores, who helped them to maintain close ties with foreign capital. Furthermore, the compradores, along with foreign suppliers, milked the treasury of every possible cent when buying foreign machines, equipment, arms, warships, steamers, and raw materials for government arsenals, and so on. This made for a certain merging of the bureaucratic and compradore elements.

Yet most of the officials appointed to mixed enterprises by the treasury or by Zhang Zhidong or Li Hongzhang, though wielding great power, had not the faintest idea of the specific nature, even the substance of what they were to supervise and control. Meanwhile, private investors' complaints of arbitrary behaviour by bureaucrats and their protégés, were either ignored or even muzzled. Official abuses and redistribution of dividends to the detriment of private shareholders were in evidence at nearly all *guandu shangban* enterprises. Most things were done without the knowledge and against the will of private investors. This was the reason why by the 1890s private capital, which had by then shed its swaddling clothes, began to avoid involvement in these companies.

Still, having been the first to arise, and enjoying the support of the imperial authorities, state-operated and mixed enterprises retained top place in Chinese industry until the early 20th century. This was the result of the peculiar role played for more than thirty years (1861-1894) by this backward and artificially conceived state capitalism. By and large, however, despite its backwardness and its controversial nature, given all the obstructions that official dogma created for private enterprise, state-operated industry had had a positive effect on China's social and economic development. Indeed, the 'self-strengthening' leaders had created seats of national machine

production at a time when private capital was not yet ripe for large-scale industrial construction. It had neither the experience nor enough money, neither skill nor access to sufficiently large credits. Especially in the 1860s, and until the 1880s. And at that time state capitalism accomplished what the early national bourgeoisie still lacked muscle to accomplish.

But in the 1890s, having by then performed its trail-blazing function, however severe the schooling it afforded may have been, and having to some measure paved the way for more advanced economic modes of operation, state and mixed capitalism began to withdraw to the background. This was due, among other things, to the tests that 'self-strengthening' had failed to stand in two wars—the one with France in 1884-1885 and with Japan in 1894-1895. The Qing's ignominious defeat at the hands of Japan put an end to official 'self-strengthening'. Still, the building of state and mixed enterprises continued.

On the whole, mixed enterprises had a stimulating effect on the development of machine production and on the emergence of a big bourgeoisie, especially among those who were closely associated with the governmental apparatus, among the *shenshi* gentry, and the compradores. Independent industrial enterprise by merchant elements was held down, and this for a long time. They were too weak and backward, or more bluntly, still naturally immature to tackle construction of machine-powered factories. In the 1870s, Chinese private capital was only making its first independent attempts at setting up enterprises. Not until the mid-1880s did private factories begin to spring up in more or less large numbers. Joint-stock enterprises were the most popular, for here investment was less of a risk than in one-man undertakings, in which industrialists would invest no more than some 30,000 *yuan*, and this chiefly in silk processing.

Silk processing proved best adapted for conversion to machine production. The large number of manufactories, the high demand in the world, and the large profits derived from the silk trade stimulated the introduction of machinery. But, as a rule, silk-reeling factories were of small size. The assets of the biggest were never in excess of 80,000 *yuan*. Enterprises in Guangzhou-Shunde and its environs, for example, had modest assets (averaging 20,000 to 40,000 *yuan*), and large work forces (400 to 500 per factory). At the outset, most of them differed only slightly from manufactories, for like the latter they depended on the state of the world market, with a decline in world prices liable to put them out of business. Many factories would close one day, open the next, and again suspend operations the third. Only a few survived longer than ten years. Silk spinning and reeling was one of the fields where private factories were widespread. Indeed, on the eve of the Sino-Japanese war silk processing claimed

as much as 54 per cent of total Chinese private investments in industry.

Gradually, factories appeared in cotton ginning, weaving and spinning, flour milling, oil refining, match making, printing, and ship's repair. The early cotton mills specialised chiefly in spinning. But here private mills grew slowly owing to the monopoly of the Shanghai Cotton Mill obtained by its factual owner, Li Hongzhang, in 1882. As in other backward semicolonial countries stuck in an early stage of industrial growth, the textile and food-processing industries of the Qing Empire were the quickest to grow, while machine building was virtually non-existent. Local enterprise was retarded by the competition of West European, American, and Japanese commodities, by foreigners usurping the most profitable spheres of investment, and by the abuses of the local bureaucracy.

All the same, it powered the gradual emergence of a local bourgeoisie as a distinct section of Chinese society. Such later prominent industrialists as Zhu Dachun, Yang Zonglian, Huang Zuoqing, and Yan Xinhou launched their first enterprises in the 1880s.

The sources of the private capital invested in industry were valuables plundered by regional military-bureaucratic cliques suppressing the peasant war and other anti-government insurrections, the funds of officials, *shenshi* gentry, and landlords obtained in rent and taxes through the exploitation of peasants, and the money of merchants and compradores amassed in commerce. The leading elements of the burgeoning bourgeoisie were high officials and *shenshi*. Their association with the government apparatus and treasury had given them preferential opportunities for accumulating capital and acquiring machines. By the time of the Sino-Japanese war, bureaucratic and comprador elements had established the first and, indeed, the biggest machine-powered enterprises. So, until the turn of the 20th century, national capitalism was largely represented by people like Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, Sheng Xuanhuai, Zhu Hongdu, Zhang Jian, Yan Xinhou, Pang Yuanji, and Yang Zonglian.

The emancipation of private factories from the trammels of *guandu shangban* left a deep impression on the rising Chinese bourgeoisie. Such members of the state sector and China's peculiar state capitalism as Tang Tingshu, Zheng Guanying, and other leading shareholders and managers of the largest mixed companies, carried extraordinary weight. The private sector was far less influential, and was directly linked with the state sector through mixed enterprises, which indeed accounted for the bulk of the then still very weak Chinese private capital. The average merchant who wished to invest his capital in machine production had fewer opportunities by far

than officials and *shenshi*. Even the most prominent members of the young national bourgeoisie, such as Zhang Jian, were compelled to seek the protection of viceroys and provincial governors.

The bourgeoisie of merchant, money-lender, or manufacturer background was still very weak and had practically no influence. Owing to limited sources of accumulation and the adverse taxation and trading policies of the Manchu regime, this group did not take up industrial construction until later. The industrial entrepreneurship of the more wealthy members of the merchant class, including overseas Chinese, such as Zhang Zhenxun and Zhou Tingbi, had only just begun. Traders, money-lenders, owners of workshops and manufactories, run-of-the-mill *shenshi* and landlords, launched chiefly small and medium-size enterprises. Shortage of capital among this section of the bourgeoisie resulted in the predominance of joint-stock companies. National capital was in its infancy, and experienced all the difficulties common to this stage. Owing to the predominance of the peculiar state capitalism in the Qing Empire of the 'self-strengthening' period independent local enterprise was doomed to obscurity. The state sector was securely in the lead in national factory production: it accounted for the biggest assets and the biggest work force, its capital by 1895 exceeding that of the private sector more than twentyfold.

Private enterprise improved its position after the collapse of the 'self-strengthening' policy. The period following the Sino-Japanese war saw vigorous economic activity. In the four years after the war China had its first industrial boom, with the number of Chinese-owned factories and mines commissioned each year doubling in comparison with the preceding thirty years. Before the war, there were some 100 national enterprises, including state and mixed companies, while the period of boom saw at least eighty new projects going into commission.

The weakness of the bourgeoisie, and especially of manufacturers, was due in many ways to the extremely unequal terms of entrepreneurship and to the competition of foreign goods and, in particular, to the low customs duties for foreign goods and high internal taxes for domestic commodities; the 'squeeze' claimed by local authorities owing to the absence of any legal protection of private enterprises; the high cost and difficulty of transporting imported equipment; lack of local technical personnel; the continuously rising price of raw materials; absence of experience and neglect of reserve funds; the difficulties of obtaining credits, and notably the high interest charged by money-lenders.

The difficulties listed above also applied to other bourgeois and near-bourgeois groups—traders, artisans, landlords, and especially *shenshi* involved in commerce—who had expected government

assistance and a modification of economic policy. The need for change was also felt by the patriotic *shenshi* element disappointed by the failure of 'self-strengthening' and dismayed by the defeat in the war against Japan, by the intensive foreign penetration and the danger that the country would be partitioned by the foreign intruders. These people had a keen interest in reform.

Chapter 9

THE REFORM MOVEMENT 1895-1898

New forces were emerging on the social scene. The inability of the government apparatus, the diplomatic establishment, and the army and navy to protect the Qing Empire's interests against imperialist aggression, coupled with the obstacles raised by the reactionary Manchu-Chinese feudal nobility to the development of capitalist relationships—all this combined to generate an organised protest movement of the rising Chinese bourgeoisie and part of the new type of landlord in the spring of 1895. Known as the Reform Movement, it attained its greatest momentum in 1898.

The crushing defeat of the vast Chinese empire at the hands of Japan also gave impetus to a revolutionary democratic school of thought and struggle against the old order.

The Reform Movement of the Chinese Bourgeoisie and Landlords Gets Up Steam

The patriotic sentiment that swept the maritime provinces of South and East China during the Sino-French war of 1884-1885 was strongest in Guangdong province, whose people had always been moved by keen anti-Manchu feeling and had had the experience of grappling with British aggression in the two opium wars. The proximity of Hong Kong and Macao, centres of foreign commerce held captive by alien powers, eased the penetration into South China of Western bourgeois social and political ideas. Besides, by virtue of South China's and especially Guangdong's remoteness from the imperial capital, the national Chinese bourgeoisie contended with relatively fewer of the obstacles raised by the Manchu court and aristocracy. South China landlords shifted gradually from subsistence farming to monetarised agriculture, for their produce found a ready market in Hong Kong and Macao, where the Chinese popula-

tion was growing rapidly, and even abroad.

China's southern provinces had close ties with Siam, Singapore, Malaya, the Philippines, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, Hawaii, and the west coast of the United States, where many of their natives had settled in search of a livelihood or of use for their capital. The emigrants maintained continuous contacts with their relatives in the home country, and remitted money to them through Chinese or foreign banks. Those who returned to China were inclined to buy land, which they leased to tenants, thus turning into landlords.

Small wonder, therefore, that China's southern provinces were the cradle of new social forces in the late 1880s and early 90s, finding articulate proponents in Kang Youwei, of Guangdong, who put himself at the head of the Reform Movement in 1895, and Sun Yatsen, also of Guangdong, who founded the first revolutionary republican anti-Manchu organisation in 1894.

Kang Youwei was born on 19 March 1858 to a *shenshi* family in Nanhai county, Guangdong. His father, a village teacher, died when Youwei was barely eleven years old. The boy was brought up by his grandfather, a middle-echelon provincial official heading a prefectural department of education. Distinguishing himself among other boys of his age by his phenomenal memory, Kang Youwei memorised a large number of Confucian books and commentaries, passed the county examinations with brilliance, but failed several times at provincial level because the essay he had to write in the archaic *bagu* style offended his inquisitive and searching mind.

In late 1879, Kang Youwei paid his first visit to Hong Kong, and thereupon became an avid reader of books on the history and geography of the world. Following the death of his grandfather, his family in sad financial straits, Kang earned his living teaching in his native village. In 1882, on the insistence of his family, he went to Beijing to sit for the metropolitan civil service examinations, which he failed. His journey to the imperial capital and a visit to Shanghai on his way back opened his eyes to the state of affairs in the Qing Empire.

In early 1885, Kang completed work on his utopian theory of universal commonwealth (*Datong*), at which he arrived by synthesising Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist doctrine, egalitarian peasant socialism, and the bits and pieces of information he had accumulated about the political systems and social patterns in Western countries. Appalled by the poverty and suffering in his native county and elsewhere in the empire, and finding no prescriptions for improving the life of people either in Chinese or translated foreign books, Kang Youwei produced a peculiar theory of utopian communism providing for the abolition of private property and introduction of

associated, socialised production. He expounded his ideas in the *Book on the Universal Commonwealth* which, however, he did not venture to publish in fear of censorship. Its manuscript he showed only to his friends and pupils. In 1888, Kang's second trip to Beijing as an examination candidate also ended in failure, though he did succeed in gaining admission as 'lecture-goer' to the metropolitan Guozijian Academy.

In late 1888, Kang Youwei wrote an impassioned memorial to the Empress Dowager and young Emperor Guangxu, attacking the regime and accusing the court of indolence and reluctance to act and rectify matters. 'On coming to Beijing,' he wrote, 'I saw the following picture: the soldiers are weak, the finances are exhausted, the officialdom is lacking in zeal, the customs of people are depraved, discipline is eroded, and people feel no enthusiasm; the court is busy building palaces and gardens ... courtiers and officials—all are silent, ... government and provincial dignitaries lead a life of idleness, are slack in their work, and show no concern at all for the future ... the army and navy are untrained, and resources, both of the treasury and of private persons, have run dry.'¹

Kang called the throne's attention to the aggressive policies of the capitalist powers in China, and first of all to that of neighbouring Japan. 'At present,' he wrote, 'a terrible danger has arisen to our state, and its existence is directly threatened.' Kang championed the cause of the rising Chinese bourgeoisie, which was put at a disadvantage by the unrestricted imports of foreign goods and suffered abuses from foreign governments in South-East Asia and America. He warned the Manchu court that there would be another rebellion if the Qing government did not turn over a new leaf and if there were fresh acts of foreign aggression.

Having drawn a disquieting picture of the state of affairs, Kang Youwei maintained, however, that China had a potential for national revival, and that reforms were urgently necessary in politics, farming, trade, and industry. Culture, enlightenment and education needed an uplift. The civil service had to be staffed by men of ability. Kang urged Cixi and Guangxu to amend the laws, heed the voice of the people (meaning the Chinese bourgeoisie and enlightened landlords), and show discernment in selecting people to high posts.

Kang Youwei's thoroughly polemic memorial was directed against devotees of old ways, conservatism, bureaucratic corruption, and, in short, against the decaying Manchu autocracy. Kang made the impression of an inspired patriot deeply troubled by the foreign threat to his country. While calling for the introduction of a Western, parliamentary pattern of governance, he also suggested reviving certain institutions of the Zhou and Han dynasties (which he fetishised).

Though he had no detailed programme as yet, and offered no specific plan of change, he did name the essential demands later advanced by the reform party: modification of the pattern of governance to invigorate the country, restriction of Manchu autocracy by recruiting 'knowledgeable and able' officials to represent the people, regardless of their occupation and estate, and dismissal of conservative officials, who were to be replaced by devotees of change.

Though the Censorate prevented Kang's memorial from reaching the Empress Dowager and Emperor Guangxu, its contents were widely circulated in the imperial capital in handwritten copies.

In the autumn of 1889, having lost hope of achieving his immediate plan, Kang Youwei returned to Guangzhou, where he again took up teaching, and continued to work for reform. Owing to his class background, which limited his vision, Kang tried to appeal to the old Confucian ethics. In August 1891, in Guangzhou, he published the first of his two works proving the need for reform, *Xinxue weijing kao* (Study of the Faked Classical Canons of the Xin School).² The book was distinctly polemic. The strictly scientific form of presentation was no more than a camouflage for sharp attacks on the existing social order. Kang made no bones about challenging the official feudal ideology, which he considered false and far removed from the 'true teaching of Confucius'. He argued that it was based on counterfeited classics produced by Liu Xin (58 B.C.-23 A.D.) in the reign of the usurper Wang Mang, founder of the short-lived Xin dynasty.

Invoking some surviving pronouncements of Confucius, Kang attacked the abuses of the eunuchs at the Qing court, the arbitrary conduct of officials, and even mentioned the unlawful nature of China's government by a foreign, Manchu, dynasty. The chief point in all genuine Confucian canons, as Kang argued, was the sage's teaching on reforming the system of state. His 'refurbished' Confucianism Kang tried to use in the benefit of the new social forces. His book made a staggering impression on his contemporaries. Large printings, five in number, were made of it in different cities of the empire over a short term. Reactionary Confucian scholars, backed by metropolitan and provincial mandarins, were enraged. They secured an imperial edict ordering the public burning of the printers' plates with the text of the book, and banning its distribution. (In 1898, following Cixi's palace revolution, a new imperial edict was issued ordering that the 'seditious' book be burned, and then a third edict in 1900, at the time of the Boxer Uprising.)

To his idea that the theory on reforming the system of state was the centrepiece of Confucianism allegedly neglected by later generations, Kang Youwei devoted his second book, *Kongzi gai*

zhikao (Study of Confucius's Doctrine on Reforming the System of State),³ which he completed at the end of 1892 but which was distributed exclusively in handwritten copies until 1898. Here, Kang Youwei portrayed Confucius as a reformer, and founder of the theory that change in matters of governance was necessary from time to time. This was clearly a bid to exploit the authority of Confucius to substantiate Kang's own plans of reform. While levelling withering criticism at the official ideology (the philosophy of Song dynasty neo-Confucianism) and arguing the need for reform, Kang Youwei leaned on the authority of Confucius to prove the unlawful nature of 'foreign tyrant' (i.e., Manchu) rule in China. He favoured Western parliamentary forms of government, and nursed his readers along to the thought, allegedly consonant with Confucian doctrine, that forcible replacement of rulers and institutions by a constitutional monarchy was entirely tolerable. But his appeals for democracy did not go beyond the idea of constitutional monarchy. His class mentality prevented him from dotting the i's and denouncing the feudal exploitation that reposed on the monarchic system. That was why Confucius in Kang's interpretation was a typical reformer, and certainly no revolutionary.

Kang Youwei meant his two books to invalidate the official Confucian philosophy, and to prove the validity of the demands for moderate political, economic, and cultural reforms. They attacked the Manchu regime and extolled Confucius, the Chinese sage. But to the discerning eye they were evidence of the economic weakness and political immaturity of the Chinese bourgeoisie, and of the limitations of Kang Youwei's class outlook. All he had done was to try and fill the old forms of reactionary feudal Confucian ideology with new, progressive content. Though as Kang portrayed him, Confucius was a champion of a strong and independent China, a champion of returning health to the state apparatus and limiting the autocratic power of emperors by democratising the system of state 'in harmony with the will of Heaven and the wish of the people',⁴ this 'reformed' Confucianism was not cleansed thoroughly enough of its reactionary features, and remained a philosophy that was foreign and incomprehensible to the mass of Chinese toilers.

Kang's books bore a heavy imprint of bourgeois nationalism. They were against the Manchu rulers and likewise against the capitalist powers and Christian religion, which was then one of the most active avenues of Western ideological penetration. The attempt to make Kang's brand of Confucianism China's official religion was a peculiar reaction of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlord estate to the activity of Christian missionaries, expressive of their aspirations to counterweigh propaganda of Christianity with their own, 'national' religion.

In 1891, Kang Youwei founded a private school in Guangzhou. It won considerable popularity, for alongside traditional Confucian disciplines it taught Buddhist and Taoist philosophy, Western science, and Western social and political subjects. Among his students Kang Youwei cultivated and recruited followers favouring his plans of reform.

In 1893, Kang finally passed the provincial civil service examinations at Guangzhou, and was given the *juren* degree. In the spring of 1894, he left for Beijing with his disciple and follower Liang Qichao (1873-1929) to sit for the highest scholarly degree of *jìnshi*. (Liang, scion of a Guangdong landlord family, had passed his *juren* examinations in 1889.) But Kang fell ill before the examinations began, and was compelled to return to Guangzhou.

To escape reprisals by the provincial authorities egged on against him by extreme conservatives with complaints that 'he does not recognise the authority of the ancient sages and violates the laws of the ruling dynasty', Kang Youwei moved from his native Guangdong to neighbouring Guangxi province, where he continued teaching and engaged in scholarly pursuits. In the spring of 1895, he again went to Beijing to take the civil service examinations, which had been delayed by the war with Japan. Here people were reacting violently to the failure of the 'self-strengthening' policy to stand the test of the Sino-Japanese war, and Kang plunged with vigour and enthusiasm into the social and political life of the metropolitan literati.

The Examination Candidates' Petition and the Emergence of an Organised Reform Movement

As soon as word of the humiliating peace terms presented at Shimonoseki by the Japanese government reached Beijing, a broad movement of protest erupted. People said the Japanese demands should be turned down, the imperial capital moved farther inland, and armed resistance to Japan continued. On 15 April 1895, *juren* from Guangdong province who had come to the capital to sit for the *jìnshi* degree gathered at the home of Kang Youwei, where they were joined by *juren* from Hunan province, to draw up a petition to the court not to sign peace with Japan. The text, written by Kang Youwei, who chaired the gathering, was signed by more than 80 people. The participants also decided to agitate against the humiliating Shimonoseki peace among teachers, *shenshi*, scholars, and metropolitan dignitaries. On learning of this undertaking, *juren* of other provinces awaiting the examinations added their signatures to the collective petition.

Stormy meetings were held in Beijing under Kang Youwei's leadership on 30 April and 1 May 1895. Attended by more than 1,200 examination candidates from different provinces, they unanimously approved the text of a 10,000-word memorial to the emperor, drawn up by Kang Youwei and his disciples, Liang Qichao and Mai Menghua, who had also come to the capital to take the civil service examinations. The memorial was signed by 604 *juren* of all provinces, and word of its content spread throughout the capital in a matter of days. The *juren* movement against the humiliating peace was met with sympathy. On the day the collective memorial was submitted, a large crowd gathered outside the Censorate building.

The 10,000-word memorial consisted of two parts: in the first the signatories opposed ratification of the peace treaty with Japan and suggested measures that would enable China to continue the war.

They recommended 1) that the emperor should issue a manifesto of repentance, acknowledging his mistakes and thus giving heart to the people, while meting out severe punishment to dignitaries who were responsible for the country's unpreparedness for war, to diplomats who had wilfully consented to the shameful peace terms, and to generals who had failed to repulse the enemy, 2) that the capital should be moved from Beijing to Xian, and 3) that the Chinese army should be reorganised on Western lines, with crack guard units forming its backbone, and that arms production in the country should be put in order and more arms should also be purchased abroad.⁵

The memorial recommended promoting gifted and able officers to top commands, and enlisting overseas Chinese in governmental and diplomatic work, and intelligence. This latter recommendation was motivated by the following: overseas Chinese 'are continuously a target of ridicule by foreigners due to China's giving up its land and our army's defeat; therefore, their sense of anger and indignation is deeper and stronger than that of their countrymen in China.'⁶ This was a reflection of the increasing weight and influence of overseas elements of the Chinese bourgeoisie on the country's political and economic life.

The second part of the 10,000-word memorial spelled out the political, economic, and cultural programme of the new social classes—the budding bourgeoisie and the commercialised landlords—that had emerged in the smothering conditions of a dual yoke, that of the Manchu absolutism and of foreign capital. 'If we continue to maintain the old order and the old laws,' the memorial said, 'external complications will plague us inexorably. If we continue to sit on our hands, the powers that are wrestling among themselves for advantages will tear our country to pieces.'⁷

The memorial criticised the feudal doctrine of 'the great and

united empire' that had in olden times reigned over the surrounding smaller and weaker peoples and backward barbarian tribes, and that had been the centre of the universe then known to China. The writers pointed out that now China was encircled by strong, industrially, economically, and militarily highly developed nations. To survive in this new world, China could not delay altering outdated methods of governance and the laws and customs that held down its development. Six priorities were listed in the memorial: emission of paper money by the state bank, construction of railways, expansion of machine-building and building of steamships, sinking of new mines, minting of coins, and establishment of a postal service.

Examining these points in their 'programme for enriching the country', the writers pleaded for protection of the interests of Chinese entrepreneurs from foreign competition. They said railway and factory construction should be taken out of the hands of the state to end the arbitrary encroachments of corrupt officials on the interests of private entrepreneurs.

This amounted to an undisguised protest against the *guandu shangban* type of enterprises promoted by the makers of the 'self-strengthening' policy, which had fostered ruin of private industrialists by regional bureaucratic and military cliques. To make sure that the people had food, the writers called on the throne to encourage growth and improvement of farming, industry, and trade, and to assist the poorest of the people. They set forth plans for industrialising the country, combating foreign capital, establishing protectionist tariffs, encouraging domestic commerce, expanding commercialised agriculture through mechanisation, growing industrial crops, improving cultivation of silk and tea, cotton and sugar cane, and securing growth of animal husbandry. Not surprisingly, the economic section of the memorial opened with a discussion of agriculture, for members of the landlord class predominated among the *juren* who signed it.

In their references to public education, the writers of the memorial pleaded with the government to train Chinese technicians, teach more people to read and write, and to reform the system of civil service examinations. They recommended that the history of China and of other countries should be taught in school, as should modern precise and applied Western science. They wanted the government to encourage writers of modern books and inventors, to set up public libraries, and to publish more newspapers and journals. A special place in their educational programme was devoted to Confucianism, which was to be the state religion and ensure ideological control over the people. Besides, it was to serve as a tool for China's colonial penetration into South-East Asian countries as the Western countries

had used Christianity to penetrate into China.

The concluding part of the memorial concerned reforms of the empire's political and administrative apparatus. There were suggestions to reinstall elements of the administrative structure of previous Chinese dynasties. But the emphasis lay on offering wide access to administrative offices for educated and able Chinese (belonging, by definition, to the bourgeoisie or landlord class), on democratising the machinery of state by letting officials at any level address their recommendations directly to the throne, on enlisting members of the *shenshi* estate (i.e., Chinese landowners) to run the country and on setting up an imperial consultative body consisting of deputies elected by the people.

In short, the political thinking of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords, as formulated in the 10,000-word memorial, aspired to nothing more than a constitutional monarchy and the establishment of parliament. The extensive plan of reform was conceived as a set of measures imposed from 'above', by decree of the Qing government. Its authors warned of the danger of another rebellion of a dimension equalling the Taiping peasant war, and enjoined Guangxu and Cixi, the empress dowager, to adopt their reform programme as the only sensible alternative to a new outburst of popular wrath. In so doing, they did not disguise their own fear of such a turn of events.

That is why, obviously, the memorial contained not a word on the agrarian question and the age-old wish of the Chinese peasant to have his own piece of land. More, it contained recommendations that were clearly contrary to the interests of the peasantry (e.g. the recommendation to award landed estates to officials who distinguished themselves, to persecute traditional popular beliefs in order to consolidate the single state religion, and the like). That the rising Chinese bourgeoisie conceived the future political system in China as a constitutional monarchy rather than a democratic republic, and that it had no intention of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty, was clear evidence of its weakness and narrow-mindedness, of its close links with feudal landlordism, and of its reluctance and inability to marshal a revolutionary mass movement against the feudalist forces.

But despite the listed faults, the 10,000-word memorial was a progressive, patriotic act of the new social forces which, by the standards of that time, had no precedent in the country's political history both in the backing it won among the people and in sharpness of tone. In sum, the memorial had a strong bearing on the subsequent course of the democratic and national movement in China, and gave visible impulse to the spread of bourgeois ideas.

The Qing government, as was only to be expected, ignored the

collective memorial, and ratified the treaty of Shimonoseki, with but the hollow consolation of a slight easing of terms secured through the intervention of Russia, France, and Germany.

When the metropolitan examinations were over, which Kang succeeded in passing this time, he was appointed clerk of the Office of Public Works in Beijing. Though he detested the civil service, he accepted the appointment, hoping to use it as legal cover for his reform efforts. On 29 May 1895, he submitted one more memorial, his third, which, unlike the first two, did reach the young emperor. Guangxu approved the suggestions it contained (this third memorial was a slightly modified version of the 10,000-word memorial). Encouraged by this breakthrough, Kang Youwei lost no time to submit one more memorial. This one, however, did not reach the throne owing to firm resistance by government dignitaries and courtiers.

Founding of a Metropolitan Newspaper and Reform Club, and the Reform Movement in the Provinces

To enlist support for their reform plans among metropolitan officials and influential *shenshi*, Kang Youwei and his followers, notably Liang Qichao and Mai Menghua, who had also stayed on in the capital after the examinations, started a daily newspaper in Beijing on their own funds. It propagated the idea of reform and acquainted its readers with international affairs. Launched in June 1895 in 1,000 copies, it was the only other Chinese daily in the capital besides the official *Beijing Gazette*, which published nothing but edicts of the court and government ordinances. Originally named *Wanguo gongbao* (World Gazette) and soon renamed *Qiangxuebao* (Strengthening the State) it was delivered daily to the same addresses as the *Beijing Gazette*. The reform paper contained translations from foreign books, newspapers, and journals, and popularised Western science and technology. Most of its contents the reformers took from a journal of the same name published in Chinese in Shanghai by British missionaries. For Kang and his followers, the paper was no more than a preliminary step to a political organisation of reformers. The next step was the founding of a reform club at the end of August 1895, named the State Strengthening Association (*Qiangxuehui*).⁸ Apart from Kang's disciples and numerous candidates of the recent examinations, the inaugural meeting at Kang's home was attended by many members of the metropolitan officialdom and *shenshi*, including such prominent dignitaries as alternate member of the Grand Secretariat Wen Tingshi, chief

instructor for the formation of a new infantry corps General Yuan Shikai (former Qing resident in Korea), and imperial censor Wang Youxia. A collection of funds for the newspaper of the Association yielded several thousand *liang* of silver. The Association held meetings every three days, attracting more and more people, who discussed ways of strengthening China and methods of economic, political, and cultural reform. The purpose of the Association was set forth in a preamble to its rules, written by request of the membership by Kang Youwei. The preamble was imbued with sincere and deepfelt patriotism, calling for all forces to rally to the country's defence against the policy of the great powers, who were out to turn China into a colony. Kang compared China's fate to that of India, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, all enslaved by foreigners. The reason for China's decline and inability to repulse foreign incursions Kang identified as lack of backbone among scholars, officials, and soldiers, and appealed to his countrymen to shake off apathy, to appreciate the danger, and to carry through reforms that alone could strengthen the empire.

The early period of the Association was essentially successful. Meetings and lectures were held regularly on its premises. It had a library of books about Western countries, and Chinese translations of various foreign authors. The Chinese diplomat and poet, Huang Zongxian, who had returned home after a long mission abroad, took a part in the activities. As the Association grew more and more popular among metropolitan officials and *shenshi*, money flowed liberally into its coffers. In response to an open letter to provincial viceroys and governors, large contributions came from Liangjiang viceroy Liu Kunyi, Lianghu viceroy Zhang Zhidong, and Zhili viceroy Wang Wenshao. The Association also received a large sum from Li Hongzhang, who wanted to be its member. But he was refused admission, for he was detested by the reformers, who held his 'self-strengthening' policy responsible for China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war.

The reactionary section of imperial dignitaries were deeply hostile to the Association. They applied pressure to many of its members in a bid to frustrate its activity, and soon Xu Tong, member of the Grand Secretariat, jointly with Chu Chengbo, a censor, submitted a memorial to the throne accusing Kang Youwei of anti-governmental intentions. Given timely warning by his friends, Kang fled from the capital on 17 October 1895, leaving the Association's affairs in the hands of Liang Qichao.

Finding shelter in Shanghai, Kang helped local reformers found a branch of the Association. He even went to Nanjing to obtain the permission for it from the acting viceroy of Liangjiang, Zhang Zhidong. Permission was granted for branches in Shanghai and Nan-

jing, and Zhang himself became a member. Soon, however, he reversed his attitude, banned the two branches, and withdrew his membership.

The reactionary clique in the court, with Cixi at its head, mounted an offensive on the patriotic liberal group of Chinese dignitaries, who had gained a strong influence on the young emperor following the country's military defeat and the collapse of 'self-strengthening'. Emperor Guangxu's tutor, Weng Tonghe, with whom Kang Youwei had established a close relationship that summer, and who headed the 'southern party' of Chinese court dignitaries and was constantly at loggerheads with Li Hongzhang's northern clique, was dismissed. This cut short his frequent contacts with the emperor. Soon thereafter, Wang Mingluan, a Chinese, and Changlin, a Manchu, both of them deputy chiefs of ministries, who were close associates of Weng Tonghe, were also removed from their posts.

The next attack of the conservatives was aimed at the State Strengthening Association. In December 1895, under pressure of the empress dowager, her nephew the emperor banned *Qiangxuebao* and the Association in view of their 'ill-intentioned and unlawful activity'. Following the closure of the Association's Shanghai branch, Kang Youwei was compelled to suspend his political activity for a time and to return to Guangzhou to escape reprisals. There, he again applied himself as a schoolteacher.

Still, the reformers' newspaper and the activity of the metropolitan club of reforms, though their existence had been short-lived, proved a contagious example for the provinces. On returning home, the metropolitan examination candidates who had signed the collective memorial, soon began to set up various reform-oriented societies, schools, clubs, and scientific associations. The patriotic sentiment that ran high after the war with Japan, coupled with the far-flung reform movement, fostered the appearance of a heretofore unseen variety of newspapers, magazines, and publications of a liberal bourgeois complexion in 1895-1898. Theorists of 'self-strengthening', such as Feng Guifen, Xue Fucheng, and Ma Jianzhong, were republished, too, for the progressive public was seeking answers to how the country should be strengthened in face of Western colonial ambitions and the threat of the empire's partitioning averted.

Reformers who had stayed on in the imperial capital after the closure of *Qiangxuebao* and the State Strengthening Association found refuge in the government's newly opened Guangshuju publishing house, which printed translations of foreign books on political and economic subjects and on science. The publishing house also put out a regular bulletin with translations of articles from foreign newspapers and journals, and periodical collections of important material, which were sent free to high-ranking metropolitan and

provincial officials. Though under the government-approved regulations, Guangshuju was to select books and articles for translation without bias of any sort, the reformers defied the rule and endeavoured to publish nothing but literature that furthered the idea of reform.

In August 1896, Liang Qichao, Huang Zongxian, Wang Kangnian, and their associates used the funds left over after the closure of the Shanghai branch of the Association to launch a political journal, *Shiwubao* (Current Tasks), which appeared in the port city every ten days under Liang's editorship in 2,000 to 4,000 copies. The journal printed memorials to the emperor with calls for reform, metropolitan and provincial news, and translations from the English, Japanese, and French. It showed a special interest in foreign articles on the situation in China. This was meant to call attention to the peril of China's partitioning by the powers, and at the same time left no opening for the censors. The journal quickly won popularity among the bourgeoisie, the landlord literati, officials, students, and liberal landlords. The journal also printed articles by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Mai Menghua, Wang Kangnian, and others, who urged reforms, expounded the principles of constitutional monarchy, recommended democratising the imperial administration, and recruiting members of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords for government jobs. Some authors went considerably further: apart from pleading for constitutional monarchy, they wrote that since emperors were wont to deceive and oppress the people, reforms should be carried out not from above, but from below. This was meant to attune readers to the thought that the country needed a republican system.

Shiwubao articles on economic subjects reflected the invigoration of commerce and of industrial activity by private Chinese entrepreneurs after the Sino-Japanese war, called for the removal of the obstacles to the country's capitalist development, and suggested ways of competing with foreign factory-made merchandise. Wang Kangnian and Mai Menghua, for example, wanted the imperial customs service to regain independence and caustically criticised the government's 10 per cent tax on goods made in Chinese modern-style factories introduced on the insistence of the British. The journal propagated patriotic ideas, urging struggle against the influx of foreign capital. Many articles pressed for the recovery of sovereign rights and territories lost by China to foreigners. They wanted all concessions and privileges granted to foreigners by the Manchu government annulled within a term of ten years, and to abolish the system of consular jurisdiction. The note that resonated in nearly all the articles was that nothing could save China except immediate reform. Directed as the articles were against the aggressiveness

of the imperialist powers, their significance at a time when the West was intensifying its colonial expansion, in 1898, was hardly to be taken lightly.

Analogous organs of reform sprang up in other cities of East, Central, and South China. In February 1897, for example, Kang Youwei's pupil He Suitian, assisted by Kang's brother Kang Youpu, started a journal *Zhixinbao* (Knowing the New) in Macao, championing Chinese entrepreneurship and the interests of overseas Chinese in the United States, Japan, and other countries. In January 1897, a journal *Tongxuebao* (Popular Science) was founded in Shanghai, informing readers of foreign states and international affairs. *Nongxuebao* (Gazette of the Agricultural Scientific Association), launched in May 1897, *Xinxuebao* (New Science) which dealt in political matters and devoted much attention to modern mathematics and physics, launched in August 1897, *Shixuebao* (Applied Science), launched in September 1897, *Gezhixinbao* (New Natural Science Gazette), launched in April 1898, and *Gongshangxuebao* (Trade and Industry Scientific Journal), launched in September 1898, are just a few of the other newly started periodicals.

Among the most popular reformist publications, along with *Shiwubao*, were *Zhixinbao*, *Xiangxue xinbao* (Journal of the Hunan Scientific Association), and *Xiangbao* (Hunan Daily).

Shiwubao and *Zhixinbao*, which appeared in port cities with large populations, were visibly influenced by the revolutionary mood of the petty bourgeoisie, the national (trade and industry) bourgeoisie, the overseas Chinese bourgeoisie, and compradore elements. The content of the Hunan publications, on the other hand, was essentially influenced by the liberal Hunan landowners, who were opposed to any radical change. They called for study of Western social, political, and applied science, but had no use for parliament or any substantive restriction of the emperor's power. In fact, some *Xiangxue xinbao* authors recommended buttressing the emperor's authority to ensure firmness in face of the powers' demands. The journal called for more foreign trade (for the Hunan landlords were exporting farm produce and the products of their mining industry), and insisted that China's relations with foreign states should repose on equal treaties.

The writings of the Hunan reformers, such as Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, Xiong Xiling, and so on, were shot through with 'provincial patriotism'. Tan Sitong, for example, extolled the natives of Hunan for maintaining their dignity and independence in relation to foreigners, and for founding modern schools, scientific societies, and mining enterprises without foreigners to aid them, whereas people in the other provinces, as he put it, toadied slavishly to foreigners.

In early 1898, Mai Menghua, now a prominent leader of the

reform movement, published an encyclopaedic 24-volume *New Collection of Articles on Political Subjects* (*Jin shi wen xin pian*), containing reformist articles on political, economic, and scientific subjects, and translations from various foreign books, journals, and newspapers. This encyclopaedia, and the *Catalogue of Books on Western Science* (*Xixue shumuzhi*) compiled by Liang Qichao and published in 1897, with references to 654 books about foreign states, contributed greatly to the spread of bourgeois social and political ideas and Western applied science.

The year 1895 also saw the beginnings of the social and political activity of Yanfu, the eminent Chinese translator and propagator of West European literature (notably the works of Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley). Soon after the Sino-Japanese war, he published a series of articles in the Tianjin *Zhibao*, comparing China's situation with that of the capitalist powers of Europe and America, and calling for economic and political reforms. Yanfu's translations and articles, which were read widely up and down the country, helped to further the growth of the reform movement.

The progressive Chinese journalism of the late 19th century also reflected the new processes getting under way in the field of culture. A new literary style had sprung up for articles on contemporary topics: it avoided the heretofore obligatory quotations from the Confucian classics and any facetious expressions adopted from the Japanese which only few could understand. The writings of the reformers, using a language close to the vernacular, won a huge readership and struck a telling blow at the old feudal culture. The writings were essentially critical, attacking the faults of feudal China and the aggressive designs of the imperialist powers.

Foreign Capital Thrusts into China, 1895-1898

Following the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, foreign capital began thrusting into China with redoubled vigour. Under the Treaty and the related agreement on trade and navigation, the Japanese had won the right to engage in industry in all Chinese ports opened to foreign trade. They were allowed to ship in factory equipment, lathes, machines, and so on. And by virtue of the most-favoured-nation clause in treaties signed with China by other powers, these rights applied automatically to the rest of the imperialist states. Referring to the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895), Lenin wrote in August 1901: 'Japan began to develop into an industrial nation and strove to make a breach in the Chinese Wall, opening the way to a choice morsel into which the capitalists of England, Germany,

France, Russia and even Italy immediately plunged their teeth.'⁹

In the more industrially developed countries, capitalism entered its final, imperialist stage of development towards the close of the 19th century. 'The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities,' as Lenin said, 'acquires exceptional importance.'¹⁰ Indeed, foreign capital jockeyed for openings in China's industrial sphere, notably light industry and particularly textiles. It also displayed great vigour in the field of railway construction.

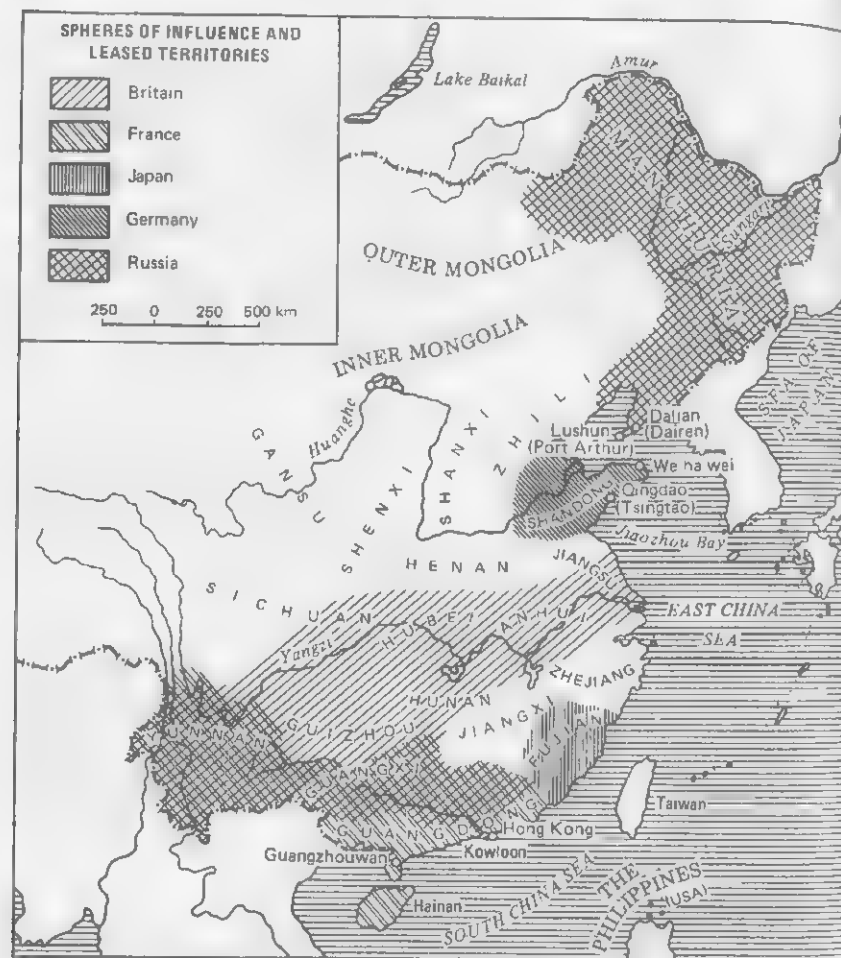
After 1895, the year of the Shimonoseki Treaty, foreign investment in China grew by leaps and bounds—in the shape of loans to the Manchu government, in money put into mining, in financing railway construction. A regular scrimmage erupted between various foreign banking groups and the various governments behind them.

A. P. Kassini, the Russian minister to Beijing, wrote in one of his communications to the tsarist Foreign Ministry: 'A swarm of various financial operators had waited for the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese war to converge on Beijing from all parts of the world with the one idea of capitalising on the current state of affairs in China and laying their hands on some large and lucrative undertaking, such as a railway concession, a patent to start a mine or to establish a bank, and so on.'¹¹

The rivalry between the powers in the colonial rape of China led to the country's partial division into 'spheres of influence'. Britain, for example, laid claim to all the provinces of the Yangzi valley and South China (Map 6). France, in 1895, obtained preferential rights to work the mineral wealth of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong,¹² and in 1897 required a commitment from the Manchu throne that it would not cede Hainan to any other foreign power. And on 9 February 1898, Britain made a similar demand concerning the provinces along the Yangzi.¹³

The Japanese, too, did not sit on their hands. Under the trade and navigation agreement of 21 July 1896, they had won freedom of trade and industry in China, and were allowed to open consulates in all Chinese treaty ports. Japanese subjects were immune to the jurisdiction of Chinese courts, and were granted all rights and privileges accorded to other foreigners. Kaiser Germany showed vigour and enterprise as well. In October 1895, it obtained the Qing government's consent to having German concessions in Hankou and Tianjin.¹⁴ Tsarist Russia won the right to build the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria, and concentrated all its attention and effort on this project. By 1897 as many as 34 Chinese ports were open to foreign trade.

The dependence of the Manchu court on foreigners, first of all Britons, who controlled the Qing treasury's biggest source of re-



Map 6

venue—the Imperial Customs—increased visibly. The government had needed money to conduct the war against Japan, and still more money to pay the huge indemnities exacted by Japan. The money came from foreign, chiefly British and German, banks on the hardest imaginable terms.

The imperialist scrimmage for the China market grew especially vicious following the so-called Jiaozhou (Kiaochow) incident when, taking advantage of the killing of two German missionaries in Shandong in November 1897, Germany sent a naval force and landing

party to occupy Jiaozhou prefecture with its seat in Qingdao (Tsingtao). On 6 March 1898, the Qing court bowed to German demands, consenting to the establishment in Jiaozhou of a German naval base (with the territory adjoining Jiaozhou Bay being 'leased' to Germany for a term of 99 years), and granting Germany monopoly rights to building a railway and working the mineral wealth of Shandong peninsula.¹⁵

At first, German capitalists operated hand in hand with the British, and were even involved in a joint loan to Beijing. But closer to the turn of the century Anglo-German differences grew to such proportions that collaboration gave way to fierce rivalry for control of the China market.

German aggressiveness provoked a new series of piratic acts that have gone down in history as the Battle of the Concessions. To counter Germany's entrenchment in China and indulging its own colonial ambitions, the tsarist government of Russia invigorated its expansionist activity. On 27 March 1898, the Qing government was forced to 'lease' to Russia part of Liaodong peninsula with the ports of Dalian (Dairen) and Lüshun (Port Arthur).¹⁶ On 27 May France obtained 'lease' of the shore of the Gulf of Guangzhouwan near Hainan,¹⁷ while Britain, which plunged into the Battle of the Concessions with equal impetuosity, gained a 99-year 'lease' of most of Kowloon and of the port of Weihaiwei in Shandong province on the southern shore of the Strait of Bohai opposite the slice of Liaodong peninsula just 'leased' by Russia.¹⁸

In July 1898, Russia was granted the concession of building a southern addition to the Chinese Eastern Railway, connecting Liaodong peninsula with the trunk line, while Japan obtained Beijing's promise that it would not 'lease' any part of Fujian province, separated by the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan, which had been captured by the Japanese in 1895.¹⁹

At the end of July 1898, their arm twisted by the imperialist powers, notably Britain, the Qing opened all rivers and lakes to foreign navigation. Unlike Chinese-made goods, foreign merchandise was exempted from internal duties and taxes.²⁰ And by 1 December 1898, various foreign companies had obtained concessions to build 7,500 miles of railway. With the connivance of the Manchu court, the powers also gained concessions to working China's mineral wealth. And all this time, to consolidate their gains, they made extensive use of ideological channels of penetration—encouraging missionary activity and launching newspapers and journals all over China.

The Patriotic Movement and the Defence of the State League

Germany's seizure of Jiaozhou generated public outrage. It was qualified first of all as an outcome of China's economic and military weakness and the throne's inability to safeguard the country's interests. Kang Youwei was in Beijing at the time. Disappointed in the government's reaction to his projects of reform, he came out with a plan for the mass resettlement of Chinese in Brazil, where he hoped to establish a new China. He plunged back into political activity. On 5 January 1898, helped by his Guangdong countrymen residing in the imperial capital, he founded the Yuexuehui (Guangdong Science Association). This was a bid to unite advocates of reform in a single political party in place of the State Strengthening Association dissolved at the end of 1895. Nominally, the Science Association was dedicated to the study of advanced Western industrial, economic, and scientific practices, and to having them adopted in China, above all Guangdong province. In parallel, Kang's disciples Ding Shuya and Shou Bofu formed a patriotic society, Zhichihui (Association of the Humiliated), with the avowed purpose of promoting crash efforts to strengthen China in face of foreign aggression.

Even prior to this, at the end of December 1897, Kang wrote a long and impassioned memorial to Emperor Guangxu, stigmatising the government for its inability to strengthen the country, ensure its territorial integrity, and counter foreign aggressions, notably the German seizure of Jiaozhou.²¹ Again, the memorial set forth a far-reaching plan of reforms. Kang Youwei recommended that the emperor should follow the example of Russia's Tsar Peter I and Japan's Emperor Mutsuhito (reign title Meiji), and take a personal part in furthering reforms. Through the good services of patriotic dignitaries from among the imperial retinue, the memorial was brought to the young emperor's notice. Impressed, he ordered members of the Zongli yamen to interview its writer. On 24 January 1898, Kang Youwei had a far-ranging talk with Grand Duke Gong and other members of the yamen, to whom he presented his reform plan. Thereupon, with the emperor's knowledge, Kang was invited to set forth his programme in a special memorial. Kang attached to it his *Notes on the Reforms of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great*, whose example of tearing down old traditions and instituting change that put Russia among the world's most powerful countries practically overnight he enjoined Emperor Guangxu to follow.

While persisting in efforts to win Guangxu's retinue to his side, Kang did not cease organising his followers in the imperial capital. A Fujian Science Association and a Shenxi Science Association were formed. And in February and March 1898, analogous associations of

reform advocates sprang up among metropolitan officials and *shenshi* hailing from Zhili, Hunan, Zhejiang, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces. In spring, candidates arrived in the capital from all provinces to sit for the civil service examinations, and most of them lost no time to join the various recently formed patriotic associations. Kang Youwei's closest associates Liang Qichao, Mai Menghua, and Kang Youpu, his brother, came to the imperial capital as well.

On 12 April 1898, they helped Kang Youwei convene the inaugural meeting of a new all-China patriotic reform group, the Defence of the State League (*Baoguoahui*). More than 200 people, mainly literati and officials, including some prominent office-holders, a few censors, and so on, attended. Kang delivered a patriotic speech, calling on the nation to tackle reforms in the name of safeguarding China against partitioning by foreign powers. Two more gatherings of metropolitan officials and literati were held on 15 and 19 April, with over 200 attending, at which Kang's idea of forming a national Defence of the State League was unanimously approved.

The statutes of the League, drawn up by Kang jointly with censor Li Shengduo, contained the following points: the League was set up to save China from continuous land seizures by foreign powers, from foreign encroachments on China's state interests, and from the continual deterioration of the people's life; the League's purpose was to fight for the country's integrity and its people's security, to propagate reform of home and foreign policy, to spread economic knowledge, and to assist the government in administration. Members of the League were called upon to remember—and never forget—the national disgrace visited on China by the war with Japan and the Treaty of Shimonoseki; they were expected to take guidance in, and defend, Confucian doctrine without fail in all matters.²² Formally, all applicants, regardless of their social status or education, would be admitted to the new party, provided they were recommended by several League members and approved by the governing board. An entrance fee of 2 *liang* of silver (about half a month's salary of an average official) was payable on admission to the League, which limited its membership to people of some affluence.

The League had two main branches, in Beijing and Shanghai, and more branches could be constituted in other towns. In social background, the organisation was a bourgeois-landlord reform party chiefly embracing patriotic *shenshi* associated with home and foreign trade and industrial development, and members of the budding Chinese bourgeoisie of East, Central, and South China. It relied on the authority of the imperial throne (idealising Guangxu to excess), and sought China's strengthening and growth into a capitalist power through moderate reforms from above, avoiding any deep-going change in feudal relations.

Soon after the constitution of the League in Beijing, similar leagues sprang up in Yunnan province, then in Zhejiang province, followed by a spate of analogous patriotic societies that declared their determination to defend the territorial integrity of the various provinces, and to promote their economy. The leagues numbered some 100 members each, who were natives of the province concerned residing in the imperial capital, and established contacts with *shenshi*, merchants, and industrialists in the respective provincial centres.

In addition to propagating his ideas through various organisations, Kang Youwei continued memorialising the throne on various topical issues of home and foreign policy, flaying the incompetence of the governing bureaucracy.

The Hundred Days of Reform

Taking advantage of the death of Grand Duke Gong, who had assiduously opposed reforms, Kang Youwei memorialised Emperor Guangxu on 6 June 1898, urging him to delay no longer and proclaim a new political course, urgently carry through reforms, and prevent any full-scale partitioning of the country by the Western powers and Japan. Aggrieved over the latest acts of foreign aggression, and hard pressed by devotees of reform, the 28-year-old Emperor Guangxu finally made his decision. He concluded that reforms would buttress the Manchu throne and imperial power, elevate his own prestige, and cover him with glory at home and abroad. The reformers lost no opportunity to encourage the emperor's vainglorious expectations.

On 11 June 1898, Guangxu issued an edict establishing the 'basic line of state policy' modelled on Kang Youwei's various proposals. The edict ushered in a short-lived period of moderate bourgeois reforms known as the Hundred Days of Reform. But it was worded in vague terms. The only specific reference was to opening a metropolitan university. (The vagueness reflected Guangxu's fear of Cixi and other conservatives.) Still, it served notice that the emperor had resolved to come to grips with the conservative dignitaries if they interfered with his reforms.

On the same day, the emperor asked provincial viceroys and governors to recommend men of ability for the diplomatic service. And on 13 June, in another edict the emperor granted an audience to Kang Youwei and other leading reformers—Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Huang Zongxian, and Zhang Yuanji.²³

Guangxu's relationship with the reformers and the edict he issued, in which all his subjects were enjoined to help carry out the change

in the country, discomposed Empress Dowager Cixi. Invoking her authority as the elder of the imperial clan, she forced her nephew to dismiss from all his posts and expel from the capital his former tutor, Weng Tonghe,²⁴ whom she thought to be behind the reform plan and saw as a prestigious and independent figure. To retain her grip on the empire's bureaucratic and military apparatus, she also made the emperor sign an edict whereby all high officials were obliged on receiving a new appointment to come and thank Cixi in person. This was on 15 June, and on the same day she had Guangxu appoint the Manchu Rong Lu, her confidant, to the office of viceroy of Zhili province, which, in effect, also made him commander of the metropolitan military garrison.²⁵ Having thus squashed Guangxu's freedom of action, she removed herself for a time from affairs of state, retiring to the background to watch and see what Guangxu's policy of moderate reforms would yield and how it would pacify the mounting opposition to the Manchu regime.

On 16 June, Kang Youwei was summoned to the emperor and prevailed on him to follow the reform programme with a firm hand. Kang urged Guangxu to marshal the support of young officials aspiring to reform, while keeping conservative dignitaries from any decisive interference in affairs of state.²⁶ Kang's followers expected him to be given a high office in the government. But apprehensive of Cixi and the conservatives, the emperor shrank from officially appointing Kang, who was disliked in the palace, to any position of command. Kang was granted a modest position in the Zongli yamen, which, however, entitled him to private audiences with the emperor and to unobstructed submission of memorials to the court. In the meantime, Guangxu asked Kang Youwei to hasten the compilation of the books he had mentioned at the audience, and to forward them to the palace. Besides *Notes on the Reforms of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great*, which was completed by that time, he referred to *A Study of the Reforms in Japan*, *Notes on the Partitioning and Downfall of Poland*, *Notes on the Decline and Ruin of Turkey Owing to Conservatism*, *Notes on the French Revolution*, and studies of reforms in Britain, France, and Germany. In all these works, Kang Youwei showed the benefits of reform, and called for undelayed change in China.

Guangxu's interview with Kang Youwei buttressed his ambition of consolidating his grip on power, and of carrying through a set of reforms. The more prominent reformers, Tan Sitong, Yang Rui, Liu Guangdi, and Lin Xu were appointed 'special commissioners attached to the person of the emperor for the implementation of the new policy', and formed a kind of inner cabinet. All papers and memorials reaching the court from metropolitan and provincial offices and from individuals passed through their hands. They

summarised the memorials in memoranda to the emperor, and drafted edicts. Behind the scenes, Kang Youwei directed their activity. In the metropolitan offices, the numerous members of the Defence of the State League gradually elbowed away conservative dignitaries.

In the Hundred Days of Reform, Guangxu issued a large number of various reform edicts that were aimed at reviving China and making it a strong and independent state. Among the most important ones were edicts on encouraging inventions and scientific discoveries to promote the development of Chinese industry, trade, and agriculture; opening central departments in Beijing for mining, agriculture, industry, trade, and railways; building and purchasing steam engines and lathes; assisting the tea and silk industries; abolishing the writing of eight-legged essays in civil service examinations; opening a university in the capital; encouraging the establishment of private schools; introducing 'Western science' in school curricula; encouraging scientific methods of farming and use of European farming techniques; severely punishing officials who obstruct commerce; modernising the armed forces; converting the Shanghai journal *Shiwubao* into an official government publication; encouraging the publication of newspapers, journals, and translations of foreign books; dissolving certain needless administrative and military offices, and reducing staffs; purging 'dead souls' from the army roll; revising the statutes forbidding Manchus to engage in trade and artisan crafts; introducing state examinations in new subjects (current political affairs, and economics); opening a medical school in the capital, and permitting *shenshi* and officials at all levels to submit memorials directly to the emperor, and so on.

Though most of these measures were not destined to come into effect owing to the resistance of the conservative elements, the edicts were clear evidence that new bourgeois forces had come alive in China.

Groups Within the Reform Camp

The reform movement was not socially homogeneous. Neither were the political views of its members. Most of the reformers, it is true, accepted Kang Youwei's political platform, at least as far as its essentials were concerned. But some leaders, like, say, Tan Sitong, were much more radical in their views than Kang. They opposed Manchu rule in China, criticised Qing home and foreign policy, and sought the introduction of a system of 'elected monarchs', that is, a republican form of governance. The political outlook of Tan Sitong, son of a prominent Hunan dignitary and Confucian

scholar, was expounded most exhaustively in his book, *The Doctrine of Humanity (Renxue)*, which he completed early in 1895. Like his other works, published in the newspapers and journals of the Hunan reformers, it was imbued with patriotism and abounded in bourgeois republican ideas. Tan saw the mounting threat to China's independence as Kang Youwei did, and traced it like Kang to the imperialist powers, which had a stake in maintaining the weak Manchu monarchist regime. To counter foreign aggression, Tan advocated alliance of five Asian countries—China, Korea, Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkey—those that were suffering the most from the same affliction and required the same radical therapy: overthrow of the monarchy and constitution of a democratic republican system.

Tan Sitong witheringly attacked the adversaries of reform—the reactionary Manchu and Chinese dignitaries who, in his opinion, were blind to the state of affairs in the country, and blind, too, to the gravity of the outside threat to China. Unlike Kang Youwei, who had his back turned to any sort of 'rabble-rousers', Tan did not disguise his sympathy for Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing, the leaders of the Taiping Rebellion, whose war against the Qing he thought lawful, legitimate, and just. Neither did he pull his punches criticising the British, the Chinese landlords, and above all his Hunan countrymen, for the aid they had rendered the Qing to put down the Taipings. He nursed utopian egalitarian social ideas much like Kang's and held that his doctrine of 'humanity' would eliminate the misery bred by social inequality in China and, indeed, benefit the peoples of Europe and America where the 'cupidity of the moneybags knew no bounds'.

The outlook of Tan Sitong and of other reformers was shot through with subjective idealism; the uppermost place in history he ascribed not to the mass of the people, but to loners—the 'heroes' and 'knights' dedicated to rooting out social evil. These views had a debilitating effect on the practical side of the movement, prompting reluctance to win the masses for the policy of reform and, on the other hand, motivating reliance on individual, untrustworthy Chinese generals (e.g., Yuan Shikai).

After Guangxu appointed Tan Sitong 'reform commissioner', the latter and Kang Youwei began falling out over the rate and methods of reform. Representing the most radical, left wing of the Reform Movement, Tan and his followers, such as Tang Caichang, were in contact with anti-Manchu secret societies and patriotic army officers and, ultimately—in the period before the revolution of 1911—their views exercised a strong influence, impelling an escalation of anti-government action.

The nucleus of the Reform Movement consisted of the most numerous group headed by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Mai

Menghua, who represented the interests of landlords whose estates in the central, eastern, and southern provinces were connected with foreign trade and domestic markets, and of various sections of the Chinese national, compradore, and overseas bourgeoisie.

Right of centre stood Kang Youpu, the brother of Kang Youwei, who pleaded with the latter to chuck politics, especially since it was clear that the emperor had no real power. Kang Youpu advised his brother to avoid entanglements with the conservatives. Indeed, he thought it best for Kang Youwei to leave China for a few years. Unlike Tan Sitong, on the other pole, who insisted on an armed uprising against the conservatives and on removing Cixi, Kang Youpu felt as early as August 1898 that the cause of reform was lost, and advised against continuing the struggle. On the extreme right of the Reform Movement, meanwhile, were high-ranking metropolitan and provincial dignitaries Li Duanfen, Zhang Yinhuan, Song Bolu and others. Earlier on, too, the movement attracted, if half-heartedly, the participation of the feudal bureaucracy, devotees of the 'self-strengthening' policy engaged in commerce and industry, such as Zhang Zhidong and Song Jianai, but when the Hundred Days of Reform began they lost no time to turn tail, rejoining the camp of feudal reaction.

Resistance to Reform and Cixi's Palace Revolution

The reform party lacked requisite resources to overcome the resistance of conservatives either in the capital or the provinces. In the short Hundred Days, Guangxu issued nearly two dozen edicts containing severe warnings to those who would cling to the old order or sabotage the new policy. Some people in high places were even dismissed.

The reformers went out of their way to win the support of the army. With Guangxu's consent, Tan Sitong went to the length of planning the arrest of Cixi, metropolitan viceroy Rong Lu, and other leaders of the conservative wing. The arrest was to have been carried out in Tianjin in October 1898, during manoeuvres of the New Army formed after the war with Japan, which the court was to attend in full array.

To lull Cixi's vigilance, the emperor ordered Kang Youwei, who had all that time been the chief target of conservative attacks in the capital, to go to Shanghai, where he was to be formal head of *Shi-wubao*,²⁷ by then already turned into an official government journal. On 20 September 1898, Kang duly departed via Tianjin and Tanggu.

The plan of arresting the empress dowager failed, however. Gen-

eral Yan Shikai, in command of the New Army corps trained and armed on Western lines, who had been enlisted by the reformers to carry out their military plans, was granted an audience by the emperor, and was elevated to the rank of deputy head of the Military Office, and betrayed the reformers' designs to the Manchu Rong Lu. On 20 September, Rong Lu denounced the reformers to Cixi, and left Tianjin for Beijing with a unit of reliable troops the following day.

On learning of the plan, the 64-year-old Cixi came to the imperial palace at the head of a detachment of her faithful Manchu guard on 21 September, and placed Guangxu, his bodyguard, and eunuchs, under detention. The young emperor was put under house arrest in Yintai pavilion on an islet at the centre of Lake Nanhai in the Forbidden City in Beijing, while the eunuchs and bodyguard were executed. Taking from Guangxu his imperial chop, Cixi published an edict in his name on the same day, introducing a regency: in it the emperor confessed that he had 'proved incapable' of resolving the many questions related to governing the empire in the extremely complicated circumstances, and 'begged Cixi to again take the reins of government into her hands'.

When Rong Lu's troops arrived in the capital from Tianjin and Baoding, he loosened wholesale searches and arrests. The Defence of the State League and other patriotic associations were outlawed. The city gates were closed. Railway connections with Tianjin were suspended. Meanwhile, learning that Kang Youwei had left the capital, leaders of the palace revolution sent urgent telegrams to Shanghai and Tianjin announcing the sudden death of the emperor from pills that had been given to him by Kang, and instructing the authorities to arrest him as the emperor's assassin, and to execute him on the spot. But with assistance from the British, Kang managed to escape arrest in Shanghai, and find asylum in Hong Kong. Liang Qichao, too, managed to escape from Beijing with the help of Japanese diplomats.

Tan Sitong, Yang Rui, Lin Xu, Liu Guangdi, Yang Shenxiu, and Kang Youpu, arrested in Beijing by the Manchu authorities for their reformist activity, were executed without trial at dawn on 28 September 1898. The Qing also came down hard on other members of the Reform Movement, stripping prominent mandarins of their rank and banishing them from the capital. Altogether, 38 persons were subjected to reprisals. A large number of metropolitan and provincial officials were retired or demoted for having shown their predilection to reform. Weng Tonghe, among others, was stripped of all his titles and expelled from the civil service for good. This punishment he incurred for having recommended Kang Youwei to the emperor and for advocating reform. Cixi repealed most of

the edicts issued by the emperor during the Hundred Days, and reinstated all reform opponents who had been dismissed from their posts. Those who had taken part in the palace revolution were promoted to higher offices and received large rewards. To win favour in the army, Cixi granted a large sum of money for distribution to the troops of the metropolitan commandery.

To preclude any attempt by Guangxu to renew the reform policy, Cixi and her intimates intended to poison the emperor and blame his death on drugs allegedly administered by Kang Youwei. But owing to sharp differences among the Manchu aristocracy as to who would succeed Guangxu on the throne, coupled with the serious annoyance displayed by landlord and capitalist elements in central, eastern, and southern provinces over the palace revolution and execution of the six reformers, Cixi thought it more prudent to spare the emperor's life. He was put under tight house arrest. Liu Kunyi, viceroy of Liangjiang, and Li Hongzhang advised the empress dowager to refrain from replacing Guangxu on the imperial throne, saying that there was mounting disaffection in the country for the clampdown on reformers and an unfavourable reaction to the palace revolution among the foreign powers.

At the outset of the Reform Movement, the British government did, indeed, show it some favour. It was inclined to establish contact with the young emperor and the reform leaders, expressing special pleasure at the retirement of Li Hongzhang, whom it publicly accused of leaning in tsarist Russia's direction. English diplomats in China did not take seriously the set of imperial edicts of the summer of 1898, designed at bottom to curb the dominance of foreign capital. So, when Kang Youwei was declared an outlaw, English consular officials in Shanghai helped him escape to Hong Kong on the assumption that the palace revolution in Beijing had been inspired by tsarist Russia.

The reformers' calls to model China's reforms on the Japanese reforms of the Meiji era aroused the interest of Japanese industrial, commercial, military, and political quarters. Marquis Ito, a former Japanese premier, had paid a special visit to China to see Guangxu. The palace revolution, however, had torpedoed Japan's plans of exploiting the reform policy in China for its own ends.

Leaders of the Reform Movement had in their memorials to the emperor advised time and again to gravitate towards Britain and to seek rapprochement with Japan. The reason for this may be traced to the fairly complete information available in China about these countries, derived from books, newspapers, and journals, from returned Chinese students, and not least of all from British and Japanese propaganda. Furthermore, after the Sino-Japanese war the Qing government was inclined to lean closer to tsarist Russia

in matters of foreign policy, and had even concluded a secret defensive alliance with it against Japan in 1896. The reformers, on the other hand, were bitterly opposed to all the acts the Qing government undertook during the stay in office of Grand Duke Gong.

To be sure, soon after the palace revolution Britain and Japan hastened to disavow the Reform Movement and any sympathy for Emperor Guangxu, giving a display of affection and fidelity to the regime established by Cixi, the empress dowager.

The re-establishment of the regency, the repeal of the reformist enterprises of Guangxu, and the reprisals showered on the reformers, generated fresh anti-government and anti-foreign turmoil. The day after the six reform leaders were executed in Beijing, anti-foreign disturbances erupted in the capital, accompanied with attacks on members of the British and United States diplomatic missions. The frightened foreign diplomats summoned warships to North China ports.

The anti-foreign unrest spread to the troops of General Dong Fuxiang, which had come from Gansu province after the palace revolution to assume quarters in the environs of the imperial capital. In the autumn and winter of 1898, anti-foreign disturbances were also registered in the provinces of Sichuan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Anhui, Shandong, and Gansu. In effect, the palace revolution of 1898 and the defeat of the Reform Movement generated an overall deterioration of the political climate in the country, with tensions rising visibly.

Chapter 10

BIRTH OF THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. THE BEGINNINGS OF SUN YATSEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY 1894-1900

Revolutionary political groups began emerging soon after the Franco-Chinese war of 1884-1885. The Qing's policy of 'self-strengthening' of the previous quarter of a century had not stood its first test: the collision with France culminated in one more ignominious surrender. The French conquest of Vietnam, which China had traditionally treated as its vassal, was received in the country as another humiliation of the once powerful Middle Kingdom. Early Chinese revolutionaries referred time and again to the impact the events of the Franco-Chinese war had made on them. 'Ever since 1885, that is, since our defeat in the war against France,' wrote Sun Yatsen, 'I made it my task to overthrow the Qing dynasty and to constitute on its ruins a Chinese republic.'¹ His associate, naval officer Cheng Kuiguang, recalled that the sinking of the southern fleet by the French had made him turn his back on the Qing.

Early Revolutionary Groups in South China

Ruminating on the causes of their country's defeat, Chinese revolutionaries arrived at the conclusion that the ruling dynasty would not be able to stop foreign aggression and safeguard the country's territorial integrity. They ascribed all the country's ills to the irrational rule of the 'alien' Manchu dynasty. They conceived the basic conflict between feudal monarchy and the new forces of Chinese society, pioneers of the burgeoning capitalist system, as a national Chinese-Manchu conflict. Following the Franco-Chinese war, these views had only begun to shape. It took another decade for a group of intellectuals in South China to arrive at the idea of an armed rising against the Manchu monarchy. The gradual advance from reformism to the idea of revolution was crowned by the emergence of the first political organisation expressing the interests of the new social forces,

setting the goal of overthrowing the Qing, abolishing the monarchy, and constituting a republic.

Among the initiators of the early underground groups that sprang up in the midst of the new intelligentsia in Hong Kong and Guangzhou after the Franco-Chinese war, a special place belongs to the great revolutionary democrat, Sun Yatsen. He was born of peasant parents in Cuiheng village, Xiangshan county, Guangdong province, on 12 November 1866. At the age of 13 he was brought to Hawaii, where he lived with his elder brother, Sun Mei, until 1883. In Honolulu, the boy attended an English missionary school (1879-1882), and on his return to China in 1883 continued his education in British missionary schools in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. From 1886 until 1892 he attended medical college in Hong Kong, where he met his future political associates. His closest friends, Chen Shaobo, scion of a *shenshi* family, Zheng Shiliang and Yang Haoling, sons of merchants, and landlord son Lu Haodong, were medical students as well. Of the other early leaders of revolutionary organisations, Yang Quyun finished a shipbuilding school, and You Lie was a mapmaker. Many of the early revolutionaries had either received a European education in China, or studied abroad. Their knowledge of the achievements of the leading capitalist states of Europe and America, their acquaintance with Western political systems, and Western history and literature, had widened their range of vision and prompted reflections on China's future.

While they were still students, Sun Yatsen and his friends were strongly influenced by the writings of the reformers and critics of the government's 'self-strengthening' policies: *Warning of Danger in the Era of Prosperity* by Zheng Guanying, the articles of Wang Tao, editor of the Shanghai newspaper *Wanguo gongbao*, and the many articles of He Qi, written in collaboration with Hu Liyuan. Sun and his friends knew these writers personally. Lawyer He Qi, indeed, was one of the founders of the medical college in Hong Kong, among whose students were many Chinese who later participated in the revolutionary movement. Zheng Guanying, hailing from Sun Yatsen's native village, edited Sun's early articles and helped to get them published in Shanghai newspapers.

The advocates of reform critical of 'self-strengthening' had close relations with compradore and overseas elements of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Seeing that the government's 'self-strengthening' policy had yielded none of the desired results (for China had become 'neither rich nor powerful'), they offered the throne their own programme of national salvation envisaging radical economic and political reforms. They criticised 'self-strengthening' for maintaining the artificial isolation of the Qing Empire from the outside world, and called for co-operation with the Western capitalist powers in building national

industry and trade. The clarion call for learning from the West, and the propaganda of Western science and of the social-political system of bourgeois governance in the West was enthusiastically received by the first generation of the new Chinese intelligentsia. To this we may ascribe the fact that Sun Yatsen's early articles and his message to Qing dignitaries were in no way original in either tenor or content. They reproduced and extolled passages from the works of Zheng Guanying, Wang Tao, and He Qi, stressing the superiority of Western farming techniques, the imperative of working the country's mineral wealth, encouraging domestic industrial development, abolishing the *liqin*, reforming customs procedures, promoting schooling and encouraging gifted and able people, and so on.

Sun Yatsen and his associates were also strongly influenced by the tradition of spontaneous anti-Manchu peasant risings. From childhood they had been told of the Taiping peasant war, and acquired sympathy for that mammoth popular rebellion. In his student years, Sun's friends called him 'the second Hong Xiuquan', and Sun himself described the Taiping chief as a hero who had fearlessly assaulted the Qing dynasty.

The young people who formed the nucleus of the early revolutionary groups were natives of the south-eastern provinces—an area where secret societies had been widespread—and many of them (as You Lie and Xie Zuantai) had been members of secret societies from an early age. Zheng Shiliang, son of a wealthy Shanghai merchant, is known to have been an influential member of the Triad secret society in Guangdong province. The young men were captivated by the spirit of comradeship and mutual assistance, devotion and self-sacrifice that pervaded the rules of the secret societies. The ideas of anti-Manchu struggle propagated by members of spontaneous movements had a distinct influence on their political thinking. Sun Yatsen attested that 'the only ones who were not ruffled by talk of revolution and overthrow of the Manchus were members of secret societies'.² Ties with leaders of anti-Manchu secret societies helped the young people to see that other options existed apart from the reforms called for by He Qi, Zheng Guanying, and Wang Tao, and that there were forces priming for armed action against the Qing dynasty.

Sun Yatsen, when still a student, spoke to his friends of a possible anti-government overturn. In fact, he and his friends Chen Shaobo, Yang Haoling, and You Lie, were known among their mates as the Four Great Brigands. Gathering nights in Yang Haoling's shop, they argued endlessly over the ways of saving China. And Sun Yatsen's later pronouncements provide evidence that in those days they spoke often of revolution. His closest friend, Lu Haodong, said later that Sun Yatsen had convinced him the Manchus had to be made to pay for their crimes. 'Our arguments went on day after day,' he recalled.

'We entrenched ourselves once and for all in the main idea. This was the beginning when Mr Sun and me made up our minds: the Manchus had got to be expelled.' As Sun Yatsen put it, the years of study in Hong Kong were for him 'a period of revolutionary discussion'.³

The first practical steps of this group of young men reflected the strong influence that reformist ideas had on them. When they finished college, they set out for their native counties to apply their newly acquired medical knowledge. In 1890-1892, as a physician in Macao, Sun Yatsen set up several dispensaries where he rendered free medical treatment, tried organising the cultivation of some new crops in Xiangshan county, and endeavoured to talk his fellow villagers into building a new road. Zheng Shiliang, too, opened a dispensary, while You Lie founded a society that propagated scientific methods of silkworm breeding. But the medical practice and public endeavours of Sun Yatsen were adversely received by the Portuguese colonial authorities. In 1892, on the excuse that Sun had no Portuguese diploma, the authorities forbade him to practise medicine in Macao. Following Sun's return to Guangzhou, a distinct change of course was observed in the activity of the young intellectuals who associated with him. Through Zheng Shiliang they tried coming to terms with Guangdong secret societies. Contacts were sought with officers of the Guangzhou garrison. In his talks with Chen Shaobo, Sun Yatsen referred more definitively to an armed uprising. He experimented with explosives, and learned to make bombs. At one gathering, it is said, the discussion centred on founding a society that would work for the expulsion of the Manchus and recovery of China's political prestige. But at that time, the plan was not carried out.

In 1890-1892, one more group of patriotic young Chinese intellectuals sprang up in Hong Kong, initiated by a teacher of English, Yang Quyun. Called the Literary Society for the Promotion of Benevolence (*furen wenshe*), its sixteen members—employees of commercial and shipping companies, and of the British colonial administration—set out to propagate knowledge under the motto, 'Take guidance in love of the motherland'. Some of its members were in sympathy with the activity of the anti-Manchu secret societies, and had ties with them.

In 1894, in a petition to Li Hongzhang, which was discussed at a meeting with his friends, Sun Yatsen attacked the policy of 'self-strengthening' and advanced an extensive programme of reforms in many ways reminiscent of the earlier plan offered by Zheng Guanying. 'The state will be neither rich nor powerful,' Sun Yatsen wrote, 'until people are given an opportunity to maximally display their talent, until the land yields the maximum benefits, the riches of Nature are used maximally, and there is an unre-

stricted flow of commodities.⁷⁴

In the spring of 1894, accompanied by Lu Haodong, Sun Yatsen went North to try and submit his petition in person to the all-powerful viceroy of the metropolitan province. In Shanghai, the two friends met Zheng Guanying and Wang Tao, who read and touched up the manuscript. Wang Tao gave Sun Yatsen a letter of introduction to a member of the Zongli yamen. In Tianjin, where they arrived in the summer of 1894, the two tried in vain to obtain an interview with Li Hongzhang. Thereupon, admitting failure, they went on a tour of the country, and visited Beijing and Wuhan. In the autumn, Sun left for Hawaii to join his brother. Sun and Lu's journey with their petition coincided in time with the outbreak of another war, this time with Japan, and more ignominious defeats for China.

Establishment of the Revive China Society

The Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 had tremendous resonance in the social-political life of China. In later days, Sun Yatsen would note that after the first several defeats, 'the Qing monarchy forfeited the spell of its power for good'.⁷⁵ The war prodded Sun and his associates to their first independent political action. In the belief that the situation was ripe for overthrowing the Qing, they set out to form an underground revolutionary organisation. The idea matured after they had, as they said, burned their fingers trying peaceful means. Li Hongzhang's refusal to receive him, and his first-hand acquaintance with the state of affairs in the country during his journey turned Sun Yatsen's mind to revolution.

Sun sailed for Hawaii with the intention of winning the support of the Chinese community there. Chinese emigrants had flocked to Hawaii in the latter half of the 19th century and, indeed, made up a quarter of the population of the islands, firmly established in farming and trade. (In the early 20th century American and British competition undermined their economic power.) In Hawaii, Sun had contacts with a large section of the Chinese community, and began agitating against the Manchus. He managed to win the support of influential Chinese in Honolulu, notably leaders of local secret society chapters. In November 1894, at a secret meeting in the home of a supporter attended by twenty-odd people, Sun inaugurated the Revive China Society (*xingzhonghui*), and distributed stations and duties among its members. Programme documents defining the purpose and tasks of the organisation were adopted. The declaration of the Revive China Society, written by Sun Yatsen, was suffused with patriotism and alarm over China's future. 'This is not the first day that rust is corroding China! The higher-ups are steeped in inertia and dishonesty; they

pass off vices for virtues, and are inflated with conceit and arrogance; the commoners are reduced to darkness and ignorance, and few of them can think in terms of the future. After the recent disgrace that covered our country and the rout suffered by the army, the enemy has seized our vassal possessions and threatens the frontiers of the fatherland. The once great Chinese state has no worthy place among the neighbouring powers, and our culture and customs have earned the contempt of foreigners.⁷⁶

The declaration expressed alarm for the country's future, and noted that China was on the brink of disaster and in danger of losing its sovereignty. Owing to the existing order, it said, it is impossible to stand up to the external dangers. Therefore, the Society called on all Chinese living in the country and abroad to unite and work jointly to revive China.

In the first two months, the Revive China Society was joined by 126 persons: vendors and traders, office clerks, and shop's attendants. A few members came from among the more prosperous overseas Chinese (owners of large farms, a cattle owner, and a manager of a financial firm). The Society concentrated on fund-raising and recruitment. It looked for people who were willing to go to China and take part in anti-government actions. A few foreign military instructors were enlisted to drill its members twice weekly. The drill was attended by some twenty people.

Now that the Hawaii organisation was launched, Sun Yatsen intended going to the United States to raise funds and propagate his ideas among the Chinese communities there. But in letters from his friends he learned that anti-government sentiment was running high in China, generated by further defeats in the war with Japan. So, at the end of 1894, he set out for home, followed soon by a group of members of the Society who wished to participate in armed actions against the Qing regime. Following his return, his closest associates Chen Shaobo, Lu Haodong, Zheng Shiliang, and You Lie, gathered in Hong Kong and decided to set up the headquarters of the Revive China Society there. The situation was decidedly propitious for anti-government agitation. Sun and his associates quickly renewed their old contacts, and made new ones. Negotiations with Yang Quyun and Xie Zuantai, leaders of the Literary Society for the Promotion of Benevolence, yielded results. A part of the members of the Literary Society agreed to join the Revive China Society and to participate in planned anti-government actions.

The headquarters of the Revive China Society was founded in Hong Kong on 27 January 1895. A few additional points were added to the declaration adopted in Hawaii, notably a detailed description of the situation in China. Using the provisions drawn up in Honolulu, a preparatory group produced the regulations of the Society. There-

upon, Sun Yatsen, Zheng Shiliang, Lu Haodong, and Deng Yinnan went to Guangzhou and founded one more branch of the Society in that city.

The core of the Guangzhou and Hong Kong chapters consisted of 50 persons, with most members of the Society, as in Hawaii, belonging to the merchant class. But the Guangzhou and Hong Kong chapters had a more substantial group of intellectuals—physicians, lawyers, and teachers. Leaders of local secret societies, too, joined the Society.

By the summer of 1895, the Hong Kong and Guangzhou branches numbered several hundred members. The bulk of the 'sympathisers' rendered the Society financial aid. Most of them belonged to the legal Agricultural Study Society, which the Guangzhou branch of the Revive China Society used as cover. The Revive China Society also had the support of two Hong Kong journalists, Thomas A. Reid and Chesney Duncan, editors of the *China Mail* and *Hong Kong Telegraph* respectively.

The membership of the Revive China Society was socially diverse. Its initiators were a small group of Hong Kong and Guangzhou intellectuals and merchants who had had a taste of Manchu oppression and were deeply affected by political developments. They turned for help to the Chinese communities in Hawaii and Japan. But the contribution of overseas Chinese, who formed the largest social group in the Society (some 80 per cent of its membership), was essentially confined to fund-raising.

The early Chinese revolutionaries worded their demands for radical economic change in exceedingly vague and general terms. Their ideas of political and social democracy, as set forth in their programme documents, were presented no less vaguely. The Revive China Society programme contained many of the provisions expounded by reformers Zheng Guanying, Wang Tao, and He Qi. The appeal to study the 'science of wealth and power' was, indeed, the central point in their propaganda. The call 'to develop all that is useful' and 'to destroy all that is harmful' was also borrowed from the reformers, for whom, however, it had a clear and specific meaning and reflected quite definite social reforms of feudal institutions that obstructed China's advancement and 'westernisation'. For the reforms 'to destroy all that is harmful'—and at that time members of the Revive China Society saw eye to eye with the reformers—meant destroying (or changing) the 'four evils': the system of appointing officials, the methods of drilling troops, the system of education, and the Manchu code of law. Conversely, 'to develop all that is useful', as conceived by the reformers, meant advancing silk weaving, mining of minerals, building of railways, and expanding steam navigation.

Apart from its declaration, the Society had a secret oath, which required the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and establishment of

democratic governance. When joining the Revive China Society, members vowed to fight 'for the expulsion of the Manchus, the revival of China, and the constitution of a democratic government'.⁷ In the specific conditions that prevailed in China, criticism of feudal institutions took on an anti-Manchu complexion and was directed against the Qing dynasty. In the declaration this was given foggy, unclear form (criticism of the political elite, their short-sightedness and corruption), whereas the oath clearly referred to expelling the Manchus. This was central: there were to be no partial modifications of the existing regime, the Qing were to be kicked out. That was the idea behind all Revive China activity. An armed anti-government plot was the only thing that could prepare the way for the desired change. The call for armed action against the Manchus, that central political demand of the Society, distinguished its programme radically from that of the reformers.

The oath to expel the Manchus was consonant with the motivations of the spontaneous movement of the masses, which reposed on the traditional non-acceptance—fired and encouraged by members of secret societies—of the rule of the northern (Manchu) barbarians.

The organisers of the Revive China Society were well versed in the patriotic anti-Manchu works written in the days when the Manchus were conquering China. To fan anti-government feeling wide use was made of Wang Xiuchu's *Records of the Ten Days of Yangzhou*, which described the brutality of Manchus, and of *Ming yi dai fang lu*, a piece by the thinker Huang Zongxi, with new editions of both these works being put out specially in the printshop belonging to a member of the Society, Feng Jingru, in Yokohama.

The second point in the oath, to fight for the revival of China, that is, for the recovery of its prestige, had been down at length in the declaration. It was a call to defend the country's sovereignty, and to use 'the science of wealth and power' to secure China's political and economic advancement. But the political ideal of the Society was expressed in very general terms. Members vowed to fight for the constitution of a 'democratic government', but did not make clear in any of their documents what sort of system of governance they conceived as most suitable. In their practices, however, they were much more resolute, concentrating all their efforts on preparing an armed action against the Qing dynasty.

The First Rising of the Revive China Society in Guangzhou

The resolution to revolt was adopted at a meeting of Society members in Hong Kong in the spring of 1895. Raising funds, recruit-

ing people with military training, and military drill—these were the chief preoccupations of the Society. In the spring of 1895, Sun Yatsen, Zheng Shiliang, and Lu Haodong, who were then in Guangzhou, began enlisting men for the planned uprising, and tried to find followers in the army. Yang Quyun and Xie Zuantai, who had stayed behind in Hong Kong were charged with obtaining arms and ammunition. The Hong Kong branch became the general headquarters for the planned uprising. The centre in Guangzhou operated under the umbrella of the legal Agricultural Study Society, which opened two or three new branches in the environs of the city. The arms were stored in the home of a man close to the Society. A workshop was set up, too, where members produced hand-grenades.

The preparations for the uprising took half a year. In this time, the leaders were busy identifying the forces that would support them. After returning from Hawaii, Sun Yatsen tried, together with Chen Shaobo, to come to terms with a group of Kang Youwei's followers, but the negotiations yielded no practical results. Attempts were made to win over the anti-Manchu secret societies. Diverse in composition, these organisations consisted of urban and rural *declassé* elements headed, as a rule, by *shenshi*, landlords, merchants, and even officials. The large number of these organisations and their considerable membership was stressed by Sun Yatsen in a talk he had with the Russian translator of his book, *Kidnapped in London*, in 1897. 'In our central provinces of Hunan and Hubei,' he said, 'more than three-quarters of the population belong to secret societies.... The south-eastern provinces, too, are teeming with secret organisations, and these also flourish in the rest of China, though there they are not as numerous. All members of secret organisations are evidently ready for action, but for that they need arms and, besides, there must be certain favourable circumstances.'⁸

The Revive China Society sent its people to the counties of Guangdong province (Xiangshan, Huizhou, and Shunde), and established ties with local secret societies. Only leaders were admitted to the Society, while the rank and file were employed as ordinary mercenaries, receiving a monthly stipend, but not informed of the aims and objectives of the plot.

The search of new people, talks with leaders of secret societies, and arms purchases were compounded with staff work—drawing up the operational plan of the uprising, and composing various programme documents. Under the final plan, an armed unit of some 3,000 men consisting of secret society members led by members of the Revive China Society would be brought in by ship from Hong Kong to Guangzhou on the eve of the action. Landing in Guangzhou, the unit was to mount an attack on government offices. At the same time, detachments from various Guangdong counties were to converge

on the city from three sides. The rising was to begin on the double ninth—the ninth day of the ninth month of the Lunar calendar (26 October)—the traditional day when people from different parts of the province came to Guangzhou to offer sacrifices on the graves of their ancestors, and the local populace, too, visited suburban cemeteries, so that the appearance of large numbers of people in the streets would not arouse suspicion. The Revive China Society members hoped they would get support from government troops, which were reduced to one-quarter of their strength since the war with Japan, and were restless because of the continual arrears in wages and food allowances. If the rising succeeded, a special manifesto would announce victory over the Qing. An address to the foreign powers, written beforehand, was to secure the neutrality, perhaps even support, of Britain and Japan. Some details had been thought out very thoroughly. The rebels were to act under a blue flag with a white sun, and it was also envisaged that all participants in the rising would have scissors with them to cut the men's queues, that symbol of submission to the Manchus.

The ultimate point in the preparations was to elect the head of the Society, who would be endowed with dictatorial powers at the time of the uprising. A scrimmage ensued over this between Sun Yatsen's followers and those of Yang Quyun. Yang was elected, for he had more followers in Hong Kong, where the Society had its headquarters. As Sun Yatsen observed later, he had not opposed the election so as not to jeopardise the uprising.

But the Revive China Society failed to carry out its plan. Only a part of the fighting men promised by leaders of secret societies arrived in Guangzhou by the scheduled day. At dawn on 26 October their chiefs came to the headquarters to get the final instructions, but saw only confusion: the main unit from Hong Kong was being delayed, and many of the leaders of the organisation were absent. The Guangzhou police, which had been informed of the action, had arrested suspects the night before. Two secret caches of arms and documents had been discovered, and a group of members, Lu Haodong among them, were detained. Out of the 3,000 men who were to have come from Hong Kong, only 200 arrived, and were instantly pounced upon by the police. When word of the reprisals reached Yang Quyun in Hong Kong, he fled abroad. Sun Yatsen and other unapprehended members of the Society in Guangzhou had had to burn the documents of their organisation, conceal whatever arms they had left, and go into hiding themselves. By that time the authorities, who declared martial law in the city, had brought in additional troops. Wholesale searches and arrests followed. The government promised a large reward for the capture of the organisers—Sun Yatsen, Yang Quyun, and Chen Shaobo. Some seventy people were

arrested. Lu Haodong and a few leaders of the Hong Kong contingent were executed. Organisers of the rising were compelled to emigrate, with Sun Yatsen, Chen Shaobo and Zheng Shiliang going to Japan, and Yang Qyun going to Africa. Many found refuge in Hong Kong.

The men of the Revive China Society had thought the Qing monarchy could be eliminated by means of local rising of a small group of revolutionaries. The deficiency of this view, however, did not detract from the historic significance of the 1895 action. Everything the leaders of the Society had done on the eve of the rising was part of the search of new forms of revolutionary struggle. Theirs was the first programme calling for organised armed action under the motto of overthrowing the Qing monarchy, recovering the country's sovereignty, and setting up democratic government. This set it apart from the general run of 'old Chinese mutinies'.

The Revive China Society After the Failure of the Guangzhou Rising, 1895-1899

The years that followed the first defeat were, so Sun Yatsen attested, the most difficult and agonising in the history of the revolutionary movement. The Society had lost many of its members. Its branches in China fell apart. The leaders who had escaped, tried in vain to expand the branches in Japan and Hawaii. Revolutionary propaganda met with little response among overseas Chinese. The cell of the Society set up by Yang Qyun in Johannesburg, South Africa, altered nothing in the bleak picture. Sun Yatsen's appeals for funds among Chinese in the United States (in June-August 1896), yielded practically nothing.

With the same purpose in mind, Sun went to Europe (November 1896 to May 1897). Here, quite unexpectedly, he won worldwide fame. The press in Europe had a field day. The Qing police, which had been on his tracks a long time, finally located him in London. He was lured into the building of the Qing diplomatic mission. There he was put under arrest, and was to be transported aboard a specially chartered vessel to China as a seditious criminal. Once in China, he could expect to be executed. Self-control and inventiveness saved Sun Yatsen from the hangman's rope. After being released, he tried to win the sympathy of the British public and the support of the European governments against the Manchus. In a book about his misadventures, *Kidnapped in London*, which appeared in England in 1897, Sun referred to the reactionary order obtaining in his country through the fault of the Manchu rulers, and examined the goals of Chinese revolutionaries.

Sun's stay in Europe gave new twists to his political outlook. In the libraries of London, where he went to fill in the gaps in his knowledge, he gained new insights in the field of natural science, notably agronomy, livestock breeding, and mining, and focussed his eyes on Western political, social, and economic doctrines. The works of Henry George (1839-1897), an American economist who thought most social problems could be resolved by nationalising land and urged the entire tax burden to be laid on privately-owned land, exercised a strong influence on Sun Yatsen's socio-political outlook. His acquaintance with bourgeois theories in the realm of constitutional law and the state, and especially with Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, left a mark on his thinking as well. Sun espoused Montesquieu's ideas about natural laws governing the life of society, and about the role of the geographical environment, and particularly his principle of grading authority. He also gathered certain information about socialism.

His first-hand contact with the realities of European life greatly impaired his idea of Western society as the best possible social and political arrangement. He saw the economic and political inequality that reigned in the European states. He saw the strikes of the English working class (the London machine builders, and Welsh miners). In London he was introduced to revolutionaries of various countries, the Russian Narodniks among others. He learned that a revolutionary movement was gathering strength to restructure the society he had thought had already resolved all vital social problems. He did not, however, manage to get a profound insight into everything he read and saw in Europe, some things remaining unclear. The food for thought he obtained there was overwhelming. He had learned enough about European history to realise that the 'expulsion of the Manchus' sought by his Revive China Society would not save the country. What he saw in the United States and Europe led him to the thought that the national, economic, and political problems bedeviling China would have to be resolved simultaneously. This was a short step to the essential idea of his future programme: the Three Principles of the People (*san min chu yi*).

The lessons drawn from the defeat of the Revive China Society in 1895, coupled with the political insights gained during his stay in Europe, impelled the evolution of Sun Yatsen's outlook. He gradually matured as a revolutionary. Only recently, he had expected separate reforms in government, the military establishment, and public health to work wonders. Now, he advanced a programme for the complete replacement of the largely decayed regime in China. Now, he was convinced that 'westernisation' would not spell deliverance. It was not enough to simply imitate European methods in order to revive China. This he defined in the clearest possible terms in his talk with

the Russian translator of his book, *Kidnapped in London*, in 1897. 'The present Chinese regime and the present government,' Sun Yatsen said, 'is absolutely incapable of either improving matters, or of carrying out reforms. The regime cannot be improved, only destroyed. One cannot expect it to revive under the influence of the times and of contacts with Western culture any more than a farmer's pig that has lived on a well-kept farm and was close to its civilised master can be expected to display an irrepressible affection for agriculture and to practise farming.'

The book *Kidnapped in London* and, notably, the article 'China's Present and Future', which appeared in the British journal *Fortnightly Review* (March 1897) contained a more definitive programme (than before) for the Chinese bourgeois revolutionaries to follow in international affairs. Addressing the European reader, Sun Yatsen did not name himself a member of any underground organisation. He spoke on behalf of the 'reform party', and strove to win the sympathy of the public and the European governments. He endeavoured to avert any 'short-sighted and selfish interference of foreigners' in China's affairs, and to obtain promises of benevolent neutrality. 'It may be enough to say,' he wrote, 'that the benevolent neutrality of Great Britain, and the other powers, is all the aid needed to enable us to make the present system give place to one that is not corrupt.'

Members of the Revive China Society who survived the rout of 1895 had emigrated to Japan, Africa, and Indochina. The first steps to reconstitute the organisation were made after Sun Yatsen's return from Europe at the end of 1897, when he and Chen Shaobo reopened the branch in Yokohama and started a new branch in Taiwan. Since the British colonial authorities had forbidden most members of the Revive China Society to set foot in Hong Kong, they had their headquarters in Japan in 1898-1900, where some 10,000 Chinese were residing at the time. Japanese political leaders raised no objections. On the contrary, the clique of Foreign Minister Okuma showed a distinct interest in the Revive China Society, hoping to use it as a lever in China's internal affairs.

The first time the Revive China Society endeavoured to come to terms with the 'reform party' as a possible ally was in 1895, when priming for its anti-government action in Guangzhou. Talks took place between the revolutionaries and the reformers in Shanghai in January. Chen Shaobo, who had been sent to the port city for this purpose, met Kang Youwei, who was *en route* to the metropolitan examinations in company with his pupils. Their talk lasted several hours.

Following the failure of the Guangzhou rising and the brutal reprisals of the Qing authorities, with the Guangzhou and Hong Kong branches of the Revive China Society going out of existence, the rev-

olutionary organisation was deserted by many overseas Chinese. In the meantime, the Reform Movement had grown in size and organisationally. The reformers founded their Defence of the State League and its provincial branches, were publishing *Shiwubao*, and soon launched a number of other reformist journals. For some time, they enjoyed the patronage of the Liangjiang viceroy Zhang Zhidong, and thereupon that of Emperor Guangxu himself.

The defeat of the revolutionaries and the success of the reformers naturally affected the relations between the two schools. The reformers saw members of the Revive China Society as nothing but 'brigand elements' and 'mutineers' who would never recover from the reprisals that had been showered on them. Still, some reformers did respond to new overtures in 1896, and renewed secret negotiations with leaders of the Revive China Society. The overtures originated with the official head of the Society, Yang Quyun. In February 1896, his closest associate Xie Zuantai speaking with Kang Guangren, the brother of Kang Youwei, had broached the subject of the revolutionaries' joining hands with the reformers. But the talks, renewed several times in 1896 and 1897, yielded no results. For the reformers, however, they provided evidence that the membership of the Revive China Society was diverse in outlook. This fired their interest in the group of Yang Quyun's followers.

In Japan, the relationship between reformers and members of the Revive China Society took a somewhat different course. The rapprochement between them was spurred by the establishment of a modern Chinese school in Yokohama, in which Sun Yatsen, Chen Shaobo, Feng Jingru, and other members of the Society took an active interest. On the suggestion of Sun Yatsen, who had just returned from Europe, it was named Chinese-Western School (*zhong-xi, xuexiao*). But the teachers, who were followers of the reform party, soon got Sun to agree to renaming it Universal Commonwealth School (*Datong xuexiao*), as suggested by Kang Youwei. In Yokohama, members of the Revive China Society had fairly frequent meetings with members of the reform party, and political topics took precedence in all their discussions.

But with the rise of Kang Youwei to high posts and the appointment of his followers to government offices in 1898, the climate at the Yokohama school changed. The reformers had waited impatiently for Kang and his followers to gain their high appointments, and fearing that their contacts with the brigands' might injure the court's attitude to the reform party, lost no time to break off ties with members of the Revive China Society. After being introduced to the Emperor, Kang Youwei wrote to Xu Qing to end all contacts with Sun Yatsen's group. Thereafter, Sun found himself isolated at the Universal Commonwealth School.

The Hundred Days of Reform were a time of agonising difficulty for the Revive China Society. The Yokohama branch publicly welcomed the winds of change, and gave its backing to Xu Qing, the chief spokesman of the reform party. Sun Yatsen and Chen Shaobo, who were forced to move to Tokyo, tried desperately to gather the Society members still loyal to the revolutionary ideal.

The palace revolution of 21 September 1898, which put an end to the Reform Movement, ushered in a new stage in the relationship between the two parties. Members of the Revive China Society declared their readiness to renew negotiations. They assumed, and rightly, that now there was a realistic foundation for co-operation. Both political groups had been outlawed by the Qing. The government persecuted their leaders, who had escaped abroad. The ultra-conservative regime of the empress dowager, which had seized the reins of power after the coup d'état, was equally hateful to both groups. Abroad, both parties experienced the same difficulties. Their failures had turned most overseas Chinese against them. Offering the reformers co-operation, the Revive China Society hoped that their views had changed following the 1898 events. After the execution of six of their leaders, the Revive China members thought, the reformers were bound to have had second thoughts, and would come closer to the people who opposed the existing order with arms in hand. Besides, a certain amount of pressure, which pushed them into each other's arms, was exerted by Japan. It had granted political asylum to Chinese revolutionaries in 1895, and to Chinese reformers in 1898, and with China holding a central place in its political plans, was intent on using all forces opposed to the Qing in its own interests. This prompted it to help both groups to join efforts, promising them assistance.

The initial attempts at renewing negotiations between the two parties failed. In November 1898, Kang Youwei refused out of hand to meet Sun Yatsen. In the long run, however, he was forced to heed the prompting of the Japanese, who had given him asylum. They were insisting on the two parties' joining hands. So, indeed, were some of his followers. By that time, the Revive China Society had succeeded in forming cells among overseas Chinese—in Japan, Hawaii, and Africa—and was getting considerable financial support from the emigrant communities. The stake the reformers had in establishing contacts with overseas communities, too, prodded them towards a rapprochement with the Revive China Society.

By 1899, the position of the reformers living in Japan deteriorated. There had been a change of cabinets, and the new Japanese government, which recognised the regency of Empress Dowager Cixi, was showing restraint in its dealings with Kang Youwei and his followers. The Japanese military said in so many words that Kang's further stay

in Tokyo was detrimental to Sino-Japanese relations. The liberal element among the Japanese intelligentsia, which had at first received Kang Youwei with open arms, also looked askance at his inactivity. Kang Youwei soon came to the conclusion that it was wiser to leave Japan. Meanwhile, he and his followers had begun planning a new, broad organisation, which they were going to dedicate to 'protecting the emperor', and Kang Youwei went on a tour to solicit backing for this movement among Chinese emigrants in the United States and South-East Asia. He was still convinced that if Emperor Guangxu, who gravitated towards reform, were reinstalled in power, there would again be a chance of carrying through requisite change by peaceful means and winning for China its due place among the great powers.

But new currents had surfaced among the reformers following Cixi's palace revolution. Alongside the group led by Kang Youwei, Xu Qing, and Mai Menghua, who made up the nucleus of the Protect the Emperor Society and consistently opposed any ties with the revolutionaries, there coalesced a small group of reformers (Bi Yongnian, and others) who openly sided with the Revive China Society.

Among the members of the Reform Movement's left wing, and among the students who followed them, there were many (Tang Caichang, Qin Lishan, Ou Jujia, and others) who saw that China could not be saved until the Qing were overthrown by armed action. Spurred by their nationalism, they looked with sympathy upon the revolutionaries, and were prepared to make common cause with them against the detested Manchu dynasty. After Kang Youwei's departure from Japan, meetings between reformers and revolutionaries there grew more frequent.

The leftward gravitation among part of the reformers was epitomised by the evolution of the views of Liang Qichao, a pupil and the closest associate of Kang Youwei. In his talks with members of the Revive China Society he observed that the slogan of protecting the emperor and that of revolution had one and the same aim, that of saving China. Liang, Ou, and others wrote of freedom and equality in the columns of the reformist paper published in Japan, *Qingyibao*. They wrote that Western enlightenment and progress were the result of revolution, and that a period of destruction was inevitable on the road to raising up the nation. Lecturing at the Universal Commonwealth School, founded in Tokyo on his initiative in 1899, Liang cited facts from the history of the revolutions in Europe and that of the United States. He won delighted admirers who yearned to emulate Robespierre, Danton, and Washington. Among them were Qin Lishan, Tang Caichang, and Lin Gui.

The shift in Liang's outlook led to transient success in the negotiations between the two organisations in exile. In the autumn of 1899, Sun Yatsen and Liang Qichao came to terms on fusing the two parties.

They decided that Sun Yatsen would head the united body, and that Liang would be his deputy. Kang Youwei was informed of this in a collective letter bearing 13 signatures. Kang's reaction was almost instantaneous. He rejected co-operation with the Revive China Society, and sent a considerable sum of money to finance the Protect the Emperor Society in Japan. Liang was instructed to come immediately to Hawaii, while Ou Jujia was to go to San Francisco and assume the editorship of the local Chinese newspaper.

When leaving, Liang assured Sun Yatsen of his loyalty to the ideas of progressive unity and to the fusion of the two parties. He made the most of Sun's letters of introduction to establish contacts with Chinese in Hawaii, and set up a local branch of the Protect the Emperor Society. He held forth before the membership that though 'protection of the emperor' and 'revolution' were different words, they meant the same thing, and buttressed his contention with stories about the two parties working jointly to prepare an uprising in Hunan. As a result of Liang's efforts, members of the Revive China Society in Hawaii transferred their allegiance *en masse* to the Protect the Emperor Society. A strongly-worded letter by Sun Yatsen, in which he accused Liang Qichao of acting in bad faith, led to an open break between the Revive China Society and Liang Qichao (in January-February 1900). The accord of 1899 had been short-lived; revolutionaries and reformers now represented two independent currents with divergent political programmes. The aim of the revolutionary group to expel the Manchus and instal a democratic government was incompatible with the reformers' plan of establishing a constitutional monarchy headed by Manchu Emperor Guangxu.

Rising of the Independence Army

In 1899, Tang Caichang, an active participant of the Reform Movement in Hunan province and a close friend of the executed Tan Sitong, came to Japan to meet Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao and to suggest an anti-government action in the Yangzi valley with the aim of reinstating Emperor Guangxu. Tang expected the reform leaders to approve his plan, and to give him financial backing.

Addressing Chinese students in Japan, Tang called on them to avenge Tan Sitong's death and fight for China's salvation. His words fell on fertile soil, for his visit coincided with a successful stage in the negotiations between Sun Yatsen and Liang Qichao. The plans of the Yangzi operation were made known not only to members of the Protect the Emperor Society, but also to the leadership of the Revive China Society. Tang Caichang, who was associated with certain members of the Revive China Society in Hunan (Bi Yongnian),

had brought a letter of introduction to Sun Yatsen, whose favour and liking he endeavoured to win. The meeting on the eve of Tang's return to China, arranged by Liang Qichao, was attended by members of both parties. In Tang's wake, a group of students left for China, including students of the Universal Commonwealth School, to take part in the planned uprising.

In Shanghai, Tang Caichang's followers started a publishing house, Eastern Publishers, which provided a good cover for their activity. At the end of 1899, they founded the Justice Society (*zhengqihui*), soon renamed Independence Society (*zilihui*). The organisers were Tang Caichang, Shen Jin, Lin Gui, and Bi Yongnian. The Independence Society had some 50 members, chiefly students studying either in China or in Japan, who were joined by several teachers and servicemen, a journalist and a merchant, and chiefs of secret societies in Central China. For the day of the founding, the leaders had drawn up a manifesto and the rules. The manifesto referred to China's desperate plight: the country was on the brink of ruin, officials and scholars gave no thought to the future of the Celestial Empire, and the heirs of great dynasties had bent their knees before barbarians. Addressing 'men of noble heart', the writers of the manifesto called on them to snap out of their lethargy, to act with the utmost resolve like the heroes of antiquity, and to cut short the rule of the Manchus on the Yangzi banks. The anti-Manchu demands blended in bizarre fashion with the slogan of protecting Emperor Guangxu.

The rules of the organisation said the key task of the membership was 'jointly to explicate the ideas of love of country and loyalty to the emperor'.⁹ The proclamations distributed by the Society in Hankou and Datong said, on the one hand, that Manchu rule was harming China and, on the other, that the movement was inspired by the goal of banishing the party of the empress dowager, and reinstalling Qing Emperor Guangxu on the Dragon Throne. In a bid to reconcile the slogan of restoring the power of the emperor with the call to fight the Manchus, Tang Caichang and his followers sought to hammer out a common political platform acceptable to both the Protect the Emperor Society and the Revive China Society. The programme of the Independence Society was thus expressive of the middle-of-the-way position of Tang's group. Yet the idea of reinstalling Emperor Guangxu lost Tang the allegiance of many of those who had initially resolved to support him (Bi Yongnian, Zhang Taiyan, and many others).

The Independence Society was sharply critical of the Yihetuan (Boxer) movement that was gathering momentum in North China. Tang's followers saw it as a 'calamity' and 'upheaval'. They considered it conservative, and renounced any possibility of collaborating with it. Indeed, they went so far as to urge 'protection of foreigners'.

The stickers they pasted on walls in Hankou and Datong in the summer of 1900 pleaded with people not to harm foreigners or their property, not to set fire to missionary temples, and not to kill Christian converts or inflict damage to foreign concessions. Some time after Cixi had ordered the Yihetuans to begin a war against foreigners, Tang Caichang convened a political conference in the British concession in Shanghai in June-July 1900.

The conference, attended by some 100 persons, inaugurated a 'parliament of China'. Rong Hong was elected chairman of the 'parliament', Yan Fu his deputy, and Tang Caichang its secretary-general. The declaration of the conference proclaimed Cixi's Manchu government unlawful, and demanded that Guangxu should be put back on the throne. The 'parliament', as its initiators conceived it, was to have been the first step in establishing a new government in South China. Tang Caichang's followers intended to capture power in Hunan and Hubei provinces, and then, relying on the aid of Zhang Zhidong, the viceroy of the two provinces, to proclaim their independence from the central government. In securing these aims they were to resort to arms. Armed detachments of an Independence Army (*zilijun*) were to go into action simultaneously at several points in Hunan, Hubei, and the west of Anhui province. There were seven such detachments, consisting chiefly of members of anti-Manchu secret societies. Some of the detachments were headed by members of the Independence Society: Lin Gui, Shen Jin, Qin Lishan, and others. The commander-in-chief was Tang Caichang, with his headquarters in Hankou.

Tang Caichang postponed the day of the rising time after time, waiting for the promised financial aid from Kang Youwei. Finally, the Independence Society leaders set the date of 24 August 1900. But the action never took place. Viceroy Zhang Zhidong, who learned of the Independence Army's plans, raided the headquarters of the conspirators in the night of August 21, and arrested their leaders. During the interrogation, Tang Caichang declared that with the fate of the Celestial Empire hanging in the balance, each man was responsible for its future, and that he had put himself at the head of the rising because he wanted to save his country, even at the price of his life.

Zhang Zhidong ordered the execution of Tang Caichang and 16 of his followers on 23 August 1900. This was a signal for wholesale attacks on members of the Independence Army. Zhang Zhidong informed the viceroys and governors of neighbouring provinces of the planned uprising. All units of the Independence Army in Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, and Jiangxi were routed. Only a few leaders of the uprising managed to escape. On returning to Japan, they charged the Protect the Emperor Society of failing to back Tang Caichang. Their

criticism of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao fired revolutionary sentiment among Chinese students in Japan, and impelled a rapprochement with Sun Yatsen.

Rising of the Revive China Society in Huizhou

The massive shift of Chinese overseas communities to the side of the Protect the Emperor Society spurred the Revive China Society into action. The revolutionaries made another attempt at organising a revolt in the south of China. Since after the defeat of 1895, Revive China Society branches had been dissolved in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, the Society had to recruit members anew. In 1899, Chen Shaobo was despatched to Hong Kong, where Sun Yatsen instructed him to start a legal newspaper. The printing plant for it was bought in Japan. *Zhongguo ribao* (China News) began publication in December 1899. Its editorial offices became a headquarters for the coming uprising. At the same time, the Revive China Society was busy establishing ties with secret societies in South and Central China. To win the backing of secret societies in Guangdong province, Chen Shaobo joined the Sanhehui, which elevated him to an honorary rank giving him powers of command over fellow-members.

The revolutionaries also succeeded in winning members of secret societies to their side in the Yangzi valley. This was done with the help of Bi Yongnian. A group of chiefs of the Elders Society (*Gelaohui*) from the Hunan-Hubei area came to Hong Kong with Bi's letter of introduction to establish contacts with the Revive China Society, and professed a keen interest in joint anti-government actions. Chen Shaobo, who negotiated with them, found common ground, and was admitted to the *Gelaohui* as member and 'chief over chiefs'. The long-drawn negotiations with secret society chiefs culminated in a conference, held in Hong Kong in October 1899, at which spokesmen of the Revive China Society, the Sanhehui, and *Gelaohui* reached an accord to set up a unified anti-Manchu revolutionary organisation to be headed by Sun Yatsen. In sum, on the eve of their new action, the revolutionaries had fairly extensive ties with secret societies in South and Central China.

The operational plan for the new rising was being drawn up in the Tokyo centre of the Revive China Society. Armed action in Guangdong would be a part of the general scheme. The Society hoped to exploit the contradictions between the powers to get some backing from Japan and Britain. And, indeed, the liberal cabinet of Yamagata, who was eager to extend Japanese influence to South China, promised the revolutionaries political and military assistance. Once the rising got off to a start, the rebel detachments in Guangdong province

were to have arms and ammunition purchased in Japan shipped in through Taiwan. The Society also hoped that if the rising succeeded, Britain would declare benevolent neutrality. Time and again, Sun Yatsen addressed assurances to the British authorities in Hong Kong that any change in his country would only consolidate Britain's economic and political positions in China—expand trade, and enlist the services of British advisers.

But the plans of the Revive China Society had had to be modified in the course of time owing to the massive anti-imperialist Yihetuan movement in North China. The revolutionaries were strongly opposed to the Boxers, for they held that their movement was inspired by the Qing court. That the Boxers were destroying all foreign innovations—railways, machines, weapons, and the like—they saw as a revolt of a backward rabble against the achievements of Western civilisation. The rapid growth of the Boxer movement, the mounting strains in the imperial court's conflict with the powers, and the foreign armed intervention, compelled the Revive China leadership to re-schedule the rising, bringing it closer. The developments in the North they assessed as propitious and favourable for a new rising in the South. In early June 1900, when the first foreign interventionist units were landing in Tianjin, Sun Yatsen arrived in Hong Kong from Japan to endorse the final plan of the rising. It had been adopted at a meeting of the Revive China leadership on 6 June, and finalised at a secret meeting aboard a ship near Hong Kong harbour on the 17th. This time the centre of the rising was shifted from Guangzhou to the Guangdong coast. First, it was more convenient to land weapons arriving from Japan on the coast and, second, the hard to reach, densely wooded hills along the coast had for years been controlled by the Sanhehui secret society. The revolutionaries took this into account, because under their plan there was to be a massive action by secret society members, and the Sanhehui in Xian, Huizhou, and Guishan counties was cast as the leading strike force. Zheng Shiliang, who commanded the most authority among the local secret societies, was to be placed at the head of the joint rebel forces. Deng Yinnan and Shi Jianru (the latter had joined the Revive China Society only recently) were put in charge of preparations for an overturn in Guangzhou, while Chen Shaobo and Yang Quyun were to remain in Hong Kong as co-ordinators.

In the field of foreign affairs, too, the revolutionaries were compelled to make alterations owing to the Boxer uprising and the eight-power intervention. Sun Yatsen and his followers saw the introduction of interventionist troops into North China as the beginning of the country's partitioning. In the summer of 1900, the Revive China Society took the extreme and desperate step of requesting Japan to intervene militarily. The revolutionaries were prepared to grant the

governments of Japan and Britain considerable economic and political privileges in China if they backed the coup d'état. They drafted the project of a federation of independent provinces, governed under the collective control of the foreign powers. They set out their proposals in a letter of 24 July to Hong Kong's Governor-General Blake. But the capture of Beijing by allied interventionist troops and the initial steps towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the Qing court and the foreign powers, compounded with the change of cabinets in Japan, cut short the Revive China negotiations with Britain and Japan.

In August 1900, when ordering Zheng Shiliang to start the uprising at once, the Revive China leaders still hoped to receive military aid from Japan. A 600-man vanguard under Zheng Shiliang opened hostilities against the local armed forces in the vicinity of Sanzhoutian. In the seaside counties members of secret societies took action in its support. So at the height of the rising the rebels numbered some 20,000. Though keeping to the pattern of the general plan, the units of different secret societies operated more or less independently. They fought under banners inscribed with the names of their leaders—those of Sun Yatsen and Zheng Shiliang—and the motto, 'For a Great China!' Faithful to the tradition of secret societies, the rebels wore red headbands, and some of them were in red-bordered white clothes. A month after starting their operation, Zheng Shiliang's detachments ran out of provisions. The supplies promised by the Revive China leadership did not arrive. The Japanese authorities on Taiwan forbade the transit of arms to China. The circumstances were desperate enough for Sun Yatsen to order Zheng to disband his men.

When Zheng had launched his operation, a group of Revive China members in Huizhou led by Deng Yinnan and Shi Jianru was to have assassinated the Qing viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi (in October 1900). This was to have caused confusion among the local authorities and thereby helped Zheng Shiliang's forces to achieve success. The operation was very carefully planned: 29 cases of dynamite were brought in from Macao, and premises were rented near the viceroy's residence. For several nights running a tunnel was dug. This done, and certain of success, the participants in the operation departed from Guangzhou, leaving behind none but Shi Jianru. As the blast did not occur at the set time, he returned to the premises to apply a few finishing touches, then blew up the government residence. But the viceroy escaped unscathed. A few days later, Shi Jianru was captured in Guangzhou, and publicly executed.

The Revive China Society had again suffered a setback. In years to come, Sun Yatsen would describe the episode as a milestone in the history of the revolutionary movement in China, associating it with the first signs of sympathy for the activity of revolutionaries among

various sections of Chinese society.

'After the defeat in 1900, I have almost never heard common people speak badly of us,' Sun wrote. 'Most of the educated people, too, expressed their sympathy and regretted that our attempt had not been successful. This meant that the situation had changed drastically. And this encouraged us. We saw that these were the first signs of the people's gradual awakening.'¹⁰

The Huizhou rising culminated the period when only a small group of lone revolutionaries went into action, and when Guangdong was the sole revolutionary centre in the country. The growth of the revolutionary movement in the subsequent period—1900 to 1905—ushered in a new stage, which saw the emergence of new revolutionary centres and the consolidation of revolutionary forces in the collision with the Qing monarchy.

Chapter 11

THE YIHETUAN UPRISING IN NORTH CHINA 1898-1901

Imperialist aggressions generated a new wave of unrest. Unlike the short-lived outbursts of violence against foreign missionaries in the preceding period, 1898 saw the disaffection coalesce into organised armed resistance.

Rise of a Spontaneous Anti-Imperialist Movement in 1898-1899

In July 1898, the French consular authorities' attempt on behalf of French commercial interests to seize a land lot belonging to the society of Ningbo merchants precipitated a general strike in Shanghai. The strikers, among whom were shopkeepers, port coolies, and boatmen were repeatedly attacked by squads of French police and seamen, backed by the British and American municipal police. The populace won, though casualties numbered 12 killed and 30 wounded.

In November, local officials in Liaodong led an armed populace in a rising to prevent the 'lease' of the peninsula to tsarist Russia, while the people of Suixi county, Guangdong province, made a stand against the French seizure of Guangzhouwan Bay.

Anti-missionary unrest, still the most active form of protest against foreign aggression, seethed in many parts of the country. In April 1898, in the vicinity of Yunnan city in Guangxi province, the populace led by the local *shenshi* drove out the perverse and obdurate French missionaries. In May, the people in the town of Shashi, Hubei province, ransacked the Japanese consulate, the homes of British consular officials and merchants, and chased away all missionaries.

The most consequential anti-missionary rioting occurred in Sichuan province in March 1898. It spread across 30 counties and

culminated in an armed rising involving some 10,000 people—peasants, paper mill workers, coolies, and *shenshi*—led by a prosperous peasant, Yu Dongchen. Its motive was to expel foreigners, and its most popular slogan was 'Obey the Qing, destroy foreigners'. But the rebels confined themselves to sacking Christian churches and confiscating the property of converts. Twenty missionary churches and 4,000 houses were destroyed, with damage being inflicted on the property of 20,000 Chinese Catholics. Owing to dissent among the leaders of the rising, the authorities had little trouble in putting it down. Brutal reprisals followed, while the foreign missions were paid an indemnity of 1,186,000 *liang*.

In 1899, riots broke out when the foreign powers moved to carry into effect 'leases' concluded the previous year. In April, the people of Dongguan and Baoan counties tried to prevent the British from taking possession of Kowloon. British police and army units quelled the rising, and colonial jurisdiction replaced the Chinese. And in July, people in Liaodong rebelled several times against the Russian tsar's administration of the 'leased' territory.

Some provincial and metropolitan dignitaries ventured to voice their displeasure with the policy of the foreign powers and the country's loss of face. Hostility was displayed by provincial governors Shou Shan (Heilongjian) and Li Bingheng, Zhang Rumei and Yu Xian (Shandong), the latter being subsequently appointed governor of Shanxi. Provincial censors, too, showed their annoyance. Outraged by the aggressiveness of the foreigners, they denounced the defeatism of the corrupt Chinese officialdom. Censor Hu Fuchen wrote in a memorial to the throne on 2 March 1898: 'How can we preserve the state if all our sovereign rights are given over to foreigners?'¹ Censor Pan Qinglan, venting his anger over the unruly behaviour of Germans in Shandong, reproached local officials for letting the intruders seize additional slices of territory in the Jiaozhou (Kiaochow) area, and for 'groveling at the feet of foreigners'. Governor Li Bingheng went so far as to advise Beijing to declare war on Germany for seizing Jiaozhou.²

A group of ultra-conservative dignitaries in the empress dowager's retinue, too, along with a few members of the Manchu nobility, had had more than they could stomach of 'barbarian' excesses. The group was headed by Gang Yi and Prince Duan (Zai Yi), both of whom were members of the Military Council (the former also being head of the Board of Civil Office), and consisted, among others, of Chancellor Xu Tong, head of the Board of Punishments Zhao Shuqiao, head of the Court of State Ceremonial Qi Xiu, Prince Duan's younger brother Prince Zai Lan, and others. Empress Dowager Cixi was a sympathiser, for she nursed resentment against Britain, Japan, France and other countries for showing favour to the reform party during

the Hundred Days of Reform. This they had indeed done in the hope of capitalising on the differences between the reformers and the Cixi clique. Later, too, after Emperor Guangxu had been physically removed from power, the diplomatic corps had twice thwarted Cixi's attempts to remove him formally as well.

Spurred by the public outcry against the foreign aggressions, the Qing took steps to buttress their military establishment. For Cixi this also meant strengthening her own influence in the army and thereby precluding possible moves to restore to power Emperor Guangxu, who was likely to renew the Reform Movement. On 11 October and 7 December 1898, the Qing issued edicts forming five new guard corps to buttress the defence of China proper. Rong Lu was appointed supreme commander. In addition, the authorities of Hubei and Jiangxi provinces were ordered to activate ten battalions each, and attach them to the five corps. Thereupon, preparations were launched to hold a troop review in Tianjin. Though the review was pure show, it created the impression of intensive military preparations.

On 5 November 1898, an imperial decree instructed local authorities to form volunteer military units in the *baojia* framework to combat banditry. The volunteers were to engage in their usual trades, combining this with military training. When the alarm sounded they would defend their town or village. And in the event of war, they would be used in battle. In May and November 1898, imperial edicts to local authorities called for efforts to reinforce the country's defence and 'unite all people ... against the enemy'.³

To placate ruffled public feeling, the Qing decided to demonstrate their determination to safeguard the nation's interests. In December, the government let the diplomatic corps know that it would henceforth grant no more railway concessions to foreigners. In March 1899, the throne turned down the Italian government's demand for the 'lease' of Sanmen Bay in Zhejiang province, and in May tsarist Russia's wish of running the South Manchurian Railway on to Beijing.

Outbreak of the Yihetuan Uprising (1898-March 1900)

The Yihetuan (Boxer) uprising began in 1898 almost simultaneously in two North China provinces, Shandong and Zhili, though until March 1900 it was more active in Shandong. Like other parts of China, the two provinces had for a long time endured the effects of foreign intrusion. The Shandong port of Yantai had been opened to foreign trade, chiefly British, as long ago as 1867, and ever since then cheap foreign-made merchandise inundated the province, competing

with local wares. This had an ill effect on the industries of local peasants and artisans, causing dissatisfaction and unrest, which were fired still more by the foreign missionaries' disdain for Chinese customs and beliefs, and the protection they accorded Chinese Christian converts.

The foreign imperialists' aggressiveness in North China had become all but unbearable after China's defeat by Japan. This, indeed, was what brought about the Yihetuan uprising. During the Sino-Japanese war, hostilities had spread to Shandong. Some of the towns in the province had been occupied by the Japanese. Seeing the weakness of the imperial troops, the local populace had prepared to defend their homes. The people were outraged, too, by Germany's piratic capture of Jiaozhou Bay. Assessing the situation in Shandong at that time, censor Hu Fuchen wrote in a memorial to the emperor on 2 March 1898: 'I have heard tell that in the province of Shandong German soldiers are killing peaceful inhabitants.... Things are at boiling point everywhere, and the people are aflame with fury.'⁴

In Zhili, as in Shandong, the foreign powers displayed a voracious appetite. Railways were being built on foreign credits and under the supervision of foreign technicians. British loans financed the Tianjin-Shanhaiguan line laid in 1895, followed in 1896 by the Beijing-Tianjin railway, the Lugouqiao-Baoding line in 1898, the Shanhaiguan-Jinzhou line in 1899, and the Baoding-Zhengding line in 1900. Where the railways appeared, traditional modes of transport began to shrivel, with a large contingent of people—boatmen, coolies, porters, and carters—losing their livelihood. The land for the railways was, in effect, taken from peasants and petty landlords without recompense of any sort. In the south-eastern part of Tianjin, the imperialist powers founded a concession, Zizhulin. On both banks of the Haihe foreigners had land, jetties, firms, banks, factories, and churches. Foreign missionaries were busy throughout the province, converting Chinese to Christianity by blandishments and gifts. And the newly fledged Christians, sensing that they had the protection of the missionaries, were at daggers drawn with their non-Christian neighbours.

The irritation with foreign abuses was exacerbated by various rumours, and by anti-foreign propaganda.

The Russian chargé d'affaires in China, A.I. Pavlov, reported to his government in October 1898 that 'more and more, absurd rumours are being spread among the populace in the capital about ... an impending massacre of foreigners as the true culprits of China's misfortunes'.⁵ He added that there had been riots in the streets of Beijing directed 'exclusively against foreigners'.⁶

The situation in the imperial capital was so disturbing in the autumn of 1898 that the diplomatic corps decided to summon an

additional contingent of foreign troops, and addressed a note to that effect to the Qing government. In October 1898, British, Russian, German, Italian, Japanese, French, and American reinforcements arrived in the capital. The diplomats had told the imperial authorities that all in all the foreign missions would have a guard of 30 soldiers, though in fact the first three units alone (the British, Russian, and German) numbered 124 men. The foreign powers also demanded that General Dong Fuxiang's troops, which had been responsible for some of the disturbances in the imperial capital, should be withdrawn from Zhili province. If this were not done, they warned, the powers would 'ensure order and the safety of their subjects by their own resources'.⁷

The people of China considered the new pressure exerted by the foreign powers in 1898-1899 a breach of China's sovereignty, fraught with the danger of the country's partitioning. In June 1899, the Russian minister in Beijing, M. Girs, wrote to St Petersburg that the Tianjin press 'is printing more and more articles saying that the partitioning of China soon was inevitable'.⁸

After the relative slackening of the feudal burdens in the provinces as a result of popular risings, landlords and local authorities in North China had begun to renew pressures on peasants. These were compounded with the hardships brought upon the people by natural calamities, specifically in Shandong province, where they recurred practically every year in the 1880s and 90s. In Zhili, too, according to Qing statistics, 26 counties suffered from disasters in 1898. In 1899 and for several successive years, dykes and earthworks along the Huanghe failed to stem the onslaught of the river, with the result that Shandong and the south-eastern part of Zhili were badly flooded. Those parts of the two provinces that escaped the inundation suffered bad droughts. Protasiev, a Russian financial agent in China, wrote in 1900, referring to Shandong and Zhili: 'There were crop failures two years running in the mutinous provinces, and the absence of rain this year, too, augurs ill for them. This had greatly aggravated matters, and has left tens of thousands of natives without hope of relief.'⁹ Rendered homeless by the floods, the desperate peasantry provided countless recruits for rebel detachments that launched a war against foreign penetration into China and the government's defeatist policy in Shandong and Zhili.

At the head of the spontaneous movement in North China stood a secret religious sect, the Yihetuan (Righteous Harmony Bands) or Yihequan (Righteous Harmony Fists), whose ideology and rites, and manner of organisation, had come down from the early 19th century. First mention of the Yihetuan occurs in an imperial edict of 4 September 1808, but it would be foolhardy to say that the Boxers of that time were the same as those of the late 19th century.

In effect, the sect in Shandong and Zhili was a conglomerate of various secret societies (Yihequan, Shenquan, Hongquan, Meihuan, Dadao, and others), and in some localities was also joined by rural militia and brigand bands.

Within the sect, the three traditional Chinese religions—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism—co-existed in relative peace, and in proclamations circulated in the metropolitan area, the Boxers described themselves in the following terms: 'Yihetuan is an alliance in which *yi* stands for righteousness and *he* for restraint (both of which were traditional Confucian virtues—*Ed.*).... The alliance practises Buddhism.'¹⁰

Members of the sect worshipped many gods, saints, and spirits. The most popular was the god of war, Guandi (Guan Yu). Among the many saints were historic personages and heroes of ancient epics—Liu Bowen, the honest and fair official of the Ming period; Zhao Yun, a character from the popular novel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; Sun Wukong, a creature of fancy, king of the apes, and the leading character in the well-known novel, *Pilgrimage to the West*, and so on. All enjoyed tremendous popularity among the people of China as fighters for justice and champions of the poor.

The Yihetuan held their gatherings at what they called 'altars', which were usually abandoned huts or plain awnings; instructors taught them various exhortations and the art of Taoist gymnastics reminiscent of fist-fighting (for which Europeans promptly called them 'boxers'). They held the naive belief that their skill in performing physical exercises and knowledge of a few 'magic' words made them invulnerable to enemy bullets and shells. And the amulets they wore, they believed, made this assurance doubly sure, though to be truly invulnerable and immortal there had to be a long spell of training and practice. Admission, which involved a prescribed mystical ritual, was individual. Like most of the other secret societies, the Yihetuan were ascetic in their ways, and admitted adolescents and women, who were organised in separate bodies—the Hongdengzhao (Red Lantern), Landengzhao (Blue Lantern), and so on.

Members who had passed a course of training at the 'altars' were formed into bands, each of which took the name of one of the eight trigrams from an ancient miscellany of farmers' lore and diviners' prognostics, *Yijing* (the Book of Changes). The most widespread were the bands of the *qian* and *kan* trigrams, whose members had their own colour of dress and special adornments.

The social background of the Yihetuan was highly diverse, and though the bulk were peasants, there were also dislocated artisans and labourers, boatmen, carters, porters, and coolies—who had lost their livelihood with the advent of the new modes of transport—and also soldiers dismissed from the army, priests and monks, *shenshi*,

and various *declassé* elements. Some local officials, being hostile to foreigners, encouraged the anti-foreign struggles of the Yihetuan in a bid to divert the fury of the mass of the people from the Chinese feudal lords.

The diverse social background of the Yihetuan left a mark on their political programme as mirrored in the inscriptions on their battle-standards, their proclamations, leaflets, and songs. The chief objective they set themselves was to combat foreign aggression. 'We are learning the sacred devices of fist-fighting,' the Yihetuan declared in one of their proclamations, 'to defend China and drive out the overseas plunderers.'¹¹ A popular slogan declared war on the Christian church and called death on Chinese Christian converts, who were seen as traitors. 'If there are still Christians in any village, they should be driven out at once, and the churches and any other premises belonging to them should be burnt to ashes,' said another proclamation.¹²

Some leaflets contained vague hints at overthrowing the Qing dynasty. In place of the alien emperors, the rebels wanted a Chinese monarch from among the descendants of the Ming. The Boxers did not, as we see, rise above the traditional Chinese peasant ideal of royalty. From the outset, they cherished the slogan, 'Support the Qing, death to foreigners'. One proclamation said: 'When the foreigners are routed, the great Qing will acquire dominance throughout the country.'¹³ Slogans supporting the ruling dynasty were circulated in Shandong and Zhili provinces, and indeed in many other parts of China, notably Sichuan and Hubei.

In coming to grips with foreigners, the Yihetuan relied chiefly on the aid of their saints and spirits, talismans and spells. 'We pronounce spells and recite the words of Buddha, we burn yellow paper and incense, summoning the saints from their caves,' said a proclamation. 'The saints leave their caves, the spirits come down from the mountains; they enter mortal men, and teach them the devices (*yihe*) of the *quan*. Upon learning the art of fighting, we shall easily subdue the foreign devils.'¹⁴ Most of the rebels were superstitious and ignorant, and had as a deep-seated belief in all sorts of ridiculous fibs. They believed, for example, that foreigners 'create paper persons and horses that do harm to the plain people of China'¹⁵ and that they 'place magic objects'¹⁶ that are dangerous to women. Epidemics, absence of rain, and other natural calamities were ascribed to the presence of foreigners.

Driven by hatred, the Boxers disavowed European culture and science, and called on the people to burn foreign-made goods, tear up railways, and destroy European-style buildings. 'We'll tear down the power lines, uproot the telegraph poles, destroy the locomotives, and sink the steamships,'¹⁷ ran a Yihetuan song. The Boxers' back-

wardness was so great that they denounced the Reform Movement. And this—their anti-foreign platform, their pro-Qing slogans, their diehard conservatism and ignorance—aligned them with the Chinese feudalists who were then in power, paving the way for their later alliance with the government of Empress Dowager Cixi.

The Boxer Uprising in Shandong was preceded by a revolt on the border between Shandong and Jiangsu of the Dadao (Big Knives) secret society under the leadership of Liu Shiduan in June and July 1896. In composition, content, and form, the Big Knives had much in common with the Yihetuan. The Dadao revolt engulfed Caoxian and Shanxian counties in Shandong, and Dangshan, Xiaoxian, and Fengxian counties in Jiangsu. Its immediate target was the German missionaries and the local Christian converts. Following the suppression of the Big Knives a calm settled over Shandong, lasting some six months. Then, in the spring and summer of 1897, came a new surge of anti-foreign disorders.

In April 1898, anti-foreign riots broke out on the border of Zhili and Shandong provinces. They followed one another in quick succession, spreading to new districts. That, indeed, was the beginning of the Yihetuan movement. During the year, disturbances were registered in some dozen Shandong counties, involving more than 25,000 participants. In 1899, the riots increased in number, reaching a climax in October and November when German technicians began surveying the Jiaozhou-Jinan railway project. More than 20 counties took part in the revolt, with some 40,000 taking up arms. The German authorities in Jiaozhou sent troops to quell the disturbances. Rebel bands attacked Christian churches, German soldiers, surveyors in the area of the future railway, and sacked the homes of local converts. Frequently, local men of substance were also attacked. But all the actions were spontaneous, disjointed, and badly organised.

The best known of the riots occurred in Pingyuan county in September-October 1899. It was provoked by local Christian converts who were capitalising on a crop failure and selling hoarded corn at exorbitant prices. The populace appealed for help to a band of Yihetuan operating in the vicinity. Headed by a prosperous peasant, Zhu Hongdeng, known as 'Heavenly Dragon', and the monk Yang Tianshun ('True Ming'), the Yihetuan defeated the provincial troops sent against them and moved on to Chiping county, striking terror into the foreign missionaries there and the local landlords. Zhu Hongdeng, the newspaper *Huibao* reported, 'has gathered two thousand men who are setting fire to churches and plundering homes in the Yucheng-Chiping area. For more than 300 li from Jinan to Dezhou, he has followers everywhere.'¹⁸ In November 1899, however, Zhu Hongdeng and Yang Tianshun were captured, and summarily executed.

Officials in Shandong were divided on how to treat the Yihetuan. Some thought they ought to be inducted into the rural militia, which would put them under the control of the local authorities. This opinion was first voiced in June 1898 by the chiefs of Dongchang prefecture and Guanxian county in a report to the provincial governor, Zhang Rumei. The report received the approval of the provincial magistrate, Yu Xian, and the governor, who issued an order 'to include the [Yihe] quan in the rural detachments, sending them to protect their homes and render mutual assistance in guarding the territory'.¹⁹ On 30 June 1898, Zhang Rumei informed the court of his idea. When appointed governor of Shandong, magistrate Yu Xian endeavoured, in effect, to follow the policy of his predecessor. He went through the motions of settling anti-foreign conflicts whenever they occurred, and cut short any action against the local authorities and landlords with a firm hand, thereby encouraging the movement against foreigners.

Other officials thought it wiser to put down the Yihetuan, whose struggles they considered a threat to the system. Among them was Jiang Kai, chief of Pingyuan county. The distinctions in approach surfaced during the Yihetuan rising in Pingyuan. On that occasion, Yu Xian won the day: he obtained the government's permission to dismiss Jian Kai and punish the commander of the detachment of provincial troops, Yuan Shidun, that had taken action against the Yihetuan.

It seems safe to say that even in the early stages of the Yihetuan movement the Qing government was inclined to use it for its own ends. Zhang Rumei's report with the recommendation of inducting the Yihetuan into the rural militia was treated favourably. Later, when Yu Xian was removed under foreign pressure (by an edict of 6 December 1899), the Qing took him under their protection and appointed him governor of Shanxi province in defiance of the remonstrances of the diplomatic corps. The new governor of Shandong appointed at the request of the foreign powers, which feared for the lives of missionaries, Yuan Shikai, issued an order on 27 December 1899 outlawing the Yihetuan and threatening dire consequences to all participants in 'disturbances'.²⁰ At the same time, however, he called on converts to return to the Chinese religion, and thereby incurred the displeasure of foreign residents.

But the spontaneous actions of the people against foreign missions and Christian converts in Shandong did not end. There were riots in the counties of Yucheng, Lingyi, Gaomi, Pingyuan, Chiping, and Feicheng. And the new governor retaliated in force. A 7,000-strong foreign-armed and German-trained army was despatched to the troubled areas. Yuan Shikai's soldiers fell upon the insurgents mercilessly, and arrested people on the slightest suspicion. The reprisals in

Feicheng county were especially brutal, for on 18 January 1900 members of the Dadao secret society there had killed an English missionary, Rev. S. Brooks.

Following Yuan Shikai's punitive expeditions in Qingping and Xiajin counties in March 1900, with the insurgents withdrawing to Wucheng, a county bordering on Zhili province, the turbulence in Shandong ceased. The Yihetuan movement pulled out of the province, and concentrated its activity in Zhili.

Yihetuan Struggles in Zhili, March-June 1900

Yihetuan actions in Zhili began in the autumn of 1899, along the border with Shandong province. The best known of their actions of that period was the rising in Jingzhou at the end of the year, led by a monk named Wu Xiu. Like the Shandong Boxers, those in Zhili initially attacked Christian churches and ransacked the homes of Christian converts. But unlike the Shandong authorities, the county chiefs and the viceroy of the metropolitan province, Yu Lu, were implacably opposed to the Yihetuan. In December 1899, Lao Naixuan, the chief of Wuqiao county, drew up a plan for interdicting Yihetuan activity, which he described as 'heretical', and for cracking down on members of the sect. In February and March 1900, viceroy Yu Lu outlawed the Boxers and issued an order to arrest them. The troops sent to the centres of unrest dealt summarily with the rebels and their followers. In Jingzhou, for one thing, government soldiers were said by a witness to have 'killed more than 30 guiltless people'.²¹

When the Shandong Yihetuan entered Zhili in March 1900, the movement came to life again. It spread like a forest fire, gravitating due north. Bands of Yihetuan set out along the Grand Canal for Tianjin, and along the Lugouqiao-Baoding railway for Beijing. The column heading for Tianjin (with the trigram *dui* on its banner), was attacked by troops under Wuqiao county chief Lao Naixuan, and was detained at Cangxian and Nanpi. Other units, with the *qian* and *kan* trigrams on their banners, crossed Xianxian and Hejian counties, and in April came to the approaches to Renqiu, where they inflicted a severe defeat on the provincial troops. Thereupon, one section set out east to Tianjin, while the other headed north for the capital. Reaching the vicinity of Dingxing in May, the latter spread out to the neighbouring counties. Wherever they went, the Yihetuan urged the populace to drive out missionaries, set fire to churches, and attack Chinese converts who refused to renounce the alien faith.

Yu Lu's troops, deployed from Tianjin, mounted punitive opera-

tions in Laishui and Dingxing counties lasting from 13 to 22 May. The insurgents, however, encircled and defeated a unit of government troops at the village of Shiting in Laishui county, and the enraged Yu Lu committed General Nie Shicheng's well-armed army against them, also ordering troops quartered in Baoding to march north. To frustrate the co-ordinated manoeuvre of the government troops, the Yihetuan pulled up and set fire to the railway tracks at Gaobeidian, Zhuozhou, Liulihe, Changxindian, Lugouqiao, and Fengtai. Boxers from other counties arrived at Dingxing, and on 4 June attacked a unit of Nie Shicheng's troops at Huangcun station, which they sacked, killing 80 government soldiers. On the advice of a group of imperial dignitaries who wanted to use the Yihetuan to fight foreigners, the court ordered Nie to recall his troops to Tianjin, and abstain from firing on the rebels.

By that time the Yihetuan had gathered at least a hundred thousand men. The biggest bands had their camps near Beijing, Tianjin, Baoding, and Tongzhou. Among the most popular Boxer leaders in the Tianjin area were the boatman Zhang Decheng, left out of work when railway communications opened between Beijing and Tianjin; ex soldier Cao Futian; prosperous peasant Han Yili; a shopkeeper's son Liu Shijiu; a boatman's daughter Huang Lian, who headed a band of women Yihetuan. Prominent among the Yihetuan leaders in the Beijing area was Li Laizhong, 'an inhabitant of Shenxi province who had fled from his home to escape his debts'.²²

The rebels failed to establish a single command. The ties between the various bands were casual, tenuous, and sporadic. Even when mounting joint military actions against the powers, each band retained its independence.

In Zhili, as in Shandong, the Boxers directed their fight against the foreign intruders. But here they were also more active against the provincial troops, though backing the Qing dynasty was still one of their chief slogans. Before the Yihetuan of Shandong had entered Zhili, the imperialist powers did not see the implications of the events. They thought the disturbances in Shandong province were, as they had previously been, of a local anti-missionary nature. But soon they became aware that the Boxer uprising imperilled their mastery in China. This spurred them into action. They applied pressure on the Qing, demanding conclusive measures to quell the rebels.

On 10 March 1900, in a joint note the diplomatic corps in Beijing demanded that the Zongli yamen should publish an announcement banning the Yihetuan in the official *Metropolitan Reporter*. They warned of dire consequences. But upon receiving reassurances that the Qing government would 'begin a further examination of the question of ensuring the safety of the Christian population',²³ the powers eased off their pressure. The ban they had wanted was not

published. Then, the rapid expansion of the movement, the Yihetuan's steady advance closer to Beijing, and their victories over government troops again goaded foreign diplomats to action. The French, Russian, and German ministers each met representatives of the imperial government, using threats and shows of force to compel the throne to put down the Yihetuan. The broader the rebel movement became, the more vigorous were the *démarches* of the foreign powers.

On 21 May 1900, the heads of the foreign missions in Beijing met to discuss the text of a collective note to the Qing government. The six-point document is a sample of the gross interference in China's internal affairs that the foreign powers practised. They demanded the arrest of all those connected with the Yihetuan sect, including those who allowed the Boxers to meet in their homes. They demanded severe punishment for police officers who lacked zeal in apprehending the Yihetuan. They demanded capital punishment for those guilty of murder and arson, and for the rebel leaders and any persons who rendered them material aid. And they demanded that the government inform the people of the northern provinces of all these steps in official notices. The Zongli yamen assured the diplomatic corps that the government would hasten to suppress the rebels. But Nie Shicheng's army, which was deployed for this purpose, failed to cope with the Yihetuan.

At their meeting on 28 May the ministers of Britain, France, Russia, Japan, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and the United States decided to summon additional troops—some 50 to 100 men each. Fifteen foreign warships dropped anchor at Dagou on 30 May, and British, American, Japanese, Russian, French, Italian, German and Austro-Hungarian units were landed. On 31 May and 3 June, they were taken to the imperial capital in special trains placed at their disposal by the Qing government. Altogether, 387 foreign soldiers and officers were stationed in Beijing, and 310 in Tianjin. More foreign warships arrived at Dagou, and by 2 June numbered twenty-one.

The landing of foreign troops, and notably their deployment in Beijing, presaged an imperialist intervention. Disregarding the assurances of Prince Qing, head of the Zongli yamen, that a force of 5,000 men of Nie Shicheng's army would guard the Beijing-Tianjin railway, Sir Claude MacDonald, the British minister, demanded that more foreign troops should be allowed to come to the capital. On 9 June, he telegraphed Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Seymour in Tianjin, asking for more troops.

The ministers of the other powers were equally energetic. On 10 June, the diplomatic corps warned the Qing that they reserved the right 'to take any measures they saw fit to protect their subjects'.²⁴ That day a mixed interventionist force of over 2,000 men under

Vice-Admiral Seymour set out from Tianjin for the capital with a three-day supply of food and 200 to 250 cartridges per man. On 16 June, a conference of foreign admirals sent an ultimatum to the viceroy of Zhili province Yu Lu and fort commander Luo Rongguang requiring surrender of the forts not later than 2 a.m. the following day. In the event of a refusal, the admirals threatened to apply force. Before any reply arrived, they took advantage of a shell accidentally fired by the Chinese, to assault the forts. In the morning of 17 June, after a seven-hour artillery duel between six foreign gunboats and the Chinese, landing parties occupied Dagou, whence they moved on to Tianjin on 21 June.

The capture of the Dagou forts was, in fact, the beginning of an undeclared war.

The policy of the Qing government, however, was as inconsistent and dual as ever, and this vis-à-vis the Yihetuan as well as the foreign powers. Two groups of courtiers clashed fiercely. A number of Chinese dignitaries and a few Manchu aristocrats who had some personal reason to hate foreigners, urged the empress dowager to support the Yihetuan, among them Prince Duan, Gang Yi, and a few other persons of high rank. The other group was opposed to aggravating relations with the foreign powers, and objected to using the Yihetuan to fight foreigners. This group included Yuan Chang, an office-holder in the Court of State Ceremonial, Xu Jingcheng, a court dignitary, Xu Yongyi, chief of the military yamen, and others, and was backed by Emperor Zai Tian (Guangxu). Some courtiers were caught between two fires. Like Rong Lu, they made common cause with the former group, but were ready any minute to reverse their stand. Those who wanted to use the Yihetuan against the foreigners were chiefly out to retain, and if possible consolidate, their grip on power.

Empress Dowager Cixi, though inclined to favour the use of the Yihetuan against the foreign powers, was keenly aware that despite their slogans in support of the dynasty, the Boxers were liable to turn their guns against the Qing throne. The Manchu court sought above all to prevent the anti-foreign struggle from growing into an anti-government and anti-feudal rebellion.

However contradictory and inconsistent the imperial edicts may have been in relation to the Yihetuan, the authorities were remorselessly firm in dealing with any rebel actions against local feudalists. An imperial edict of 11 January 1900 officially sanctioned various societies and leagues of self-defence. In the event of any incidents, local officials were instructed 'to identify only the bandits and ringleaders regardless of their affiliation to any league'.²⁵ Then, on 19 February, responding to the Zongli yamen's request to outlaw the Yihetuan (for most of the members of the Zongli yamen were against

the Boxers), the court issued a new command to the viceroy of Zhili: 'Take resolute measures ... to strictly forbid the activity of the league.'²⁶ But an imperial edict of 21 April virtually permitted the propagation of Yihetuan ideas, though stressing the need for isolating 'bandits', that is, persons disloyal to the local authorities. 'Since the populace is learning the devices of [yihe] quan to defend themselves and their families,' the edict said, 'the magistrate must establish who the person is, a bandit or not, and disregard whether or not, he is a member of the league.'²⁷

With the diplomatic corps clamouring for reprisals against the Boxers and their followers, and with dignitaries building up pressure, the imperial authorities issued a succession of edicts (on 9, 17, 29, and 30 May 1900) ordering 'a strict investigation and measures to prohibit the activity of the sect'.²⁸ But these edicts betrayed a differentiated approach to various Yihetuan bands. They said, for one thing, that 'among those engaging in fisticuffs there are good as well as evil people'²⁹ and that it was necessary 'to catch and strictly punish those [yihe] quan bandits who really unsettle peace and order, and deliberately create disturbances'.³⁰ In this way, while formally outlawing the Yihetuan, the Cixi clique sought to direct the movement along anti-foreign lines, and to suppress only that activity of 'bandits' and 'evil people' which entailed undesirable consequences for the regime.

The intervention of the imperialist powers, when it began, caused grave agitation and sharpened the struggle between the court cliques. The influence of the Duan-Gang Yi group increased, with Cixi and her intimates seeking closer contacts with the Yihetuan. Preparations were launched to organise resistance to foreign troops. An imperial edict of 6 June 1900 ordered the dignitaries Zhao Shuqiao, Gang Yi, and He Naiying to visit the Yihetuan-dominated area (the town of Zhuozhou). This was an attempt at establishing direct contact with the rebels, evidently with the purpose of determining their true intentions. On 9 June, General Dong Fuxian's army, known for its anti-foreign sentiments, was summoned to the capital. On 11 June, Dong's soldiers fell upon the chancellor of the Japanese legation, Sugiyama, in the street, and killed him. On 20 June, they waylaid and killed the German minister, Baron von Ketteler.

On 10 June, the empress dowager replaced the pro-foreign Prince Qing at the head of the Zongli yamen with Prince Duan. A few followers of the latter were installed in the yamen. A prescript of 13 June ordered the viceroy of Zhili to prevent any shipment of foreign troops from Tianjin to the capital, and the commander of Dagou, Luo Rongguang, was instructed to declare a state of siege in the forts under his command.

The first Yihetuan bands entered Beijing on 13 June 1900. Mean-

while, some 30,000 insurgents gathered round Tianjin's foreign concession of Zizhulin, on both banks of the Haihe, and on both sides of the railway track.

Two days before reaching the capital, on 11 June, the Yihetuan fought their first battle with the interventionists under Vice-Admiral Seymour, who had been intercepted by them at Luofa railway station. The foreigners' artillery halted the attacking, primitively armed Boxers. On 14 June, the Yihetuan renewed their attack on Seymour's units at Langfang and Luofa. On the 15th, the interventionists ran out of provisions, and sent part of their train back to Tianjin. But south-east of Yangcun the tracks had been torn up, and Seymour's men were trapped. His advance to Beijing was thwarted, though at the price of staggering losses for the rebels.

Fires broke out in Beijing after the Yihetuan entered the city. Between 13 and 17 June, the Boxers set alight several thousand houses, and completely gutted the rich merchant quarter outside Zhengyangmen gate. They ransacked houses and killed people in the Forbidden City, where the homes of Manchu noblemen and the imperial palaces were situated.

This turn of events augured nothing but trouble for the government. New imperial edicts appeared, calling the Yihetuan bandits and instructing the city police (in an edict of 14 June) 'to make sure and arrest the chief criminals, subject them to the most severe punishment, and force their accomplices to disperse'.³¹ The Cixi clique lost faith in the Boxers and in their ability to smite down the foreigners. Fear for her personal safety prompted the empress dowager to call Yuan Shikai's troops to the capital (by an edict of 15 June), and to summon Li Hongzhang, who was then viceroy of the Liangguang provinces. On 16 June, the government ordered Rong Lu to bring troops to the Dongjiaominxiang, Beijing's diplomatic quarter, and guard the foreign missions.

In the meantime, the infighting between the different groups of courtiers became more intensive. There were daily sittings of the Military Council on 16, 17 and 18 June, which discussed whether to go to war against the powers, and whether to rely on the Yihetuan. A participant in these discussions recorded later that 'the dignitaries all spoke at once, presenting their opinions. Some said the [rebels] should be wiped out, others that they had to be placated, some were in favour of urgent steps to halt the advance of foreign troops, and still others assumed that more troops had to be brought in for guard duty'.³² Yuan Chang's clique was the more active. It held that the Boxers had to be dispersed, and tried to convince Cixi that they were not able to stand up to the foreign powers.

The followers of Prince Duan feared that their adversaries might capture the initiative, and capitalised on the pride of the empress

dowager and her dislike of foreigners. They fabricated a four-point 'foreigners' note' including a point that demanded Cixi's removal from power. The 'note' was put before the empress dowager in the morning of the 17th, and under its impression she said that day at a sitting of the Military Council: 'Now the foreigners have provoked a conflict and the country is on the edge of disaster. If we bow to them without resistance, what face will I have when I come before my ancestors after I die? Delay is tantamount to disaster, and is it not better to die in battle?'³³

But Cixi would not rush into a war with the powers before trying to settle the conflict peacefully. On 17 June, Xu Yongyi and Lian Yuan of the Zongli yamen, and Li Shan, head of the Office of Taxes, were ordered to visit the foreign missions and 'explain to them the advantages [of peace] and the harm [of war]'.³⁴

China's War Against the Foreign Powers

On 19 June 1900, word reached the capital of the ultimatum delivered by the powers to the viceroy of Zhili and the commander of the Dagou forts. On 20 June, the news was broken to the empress dowager, and on the 21st an imperial edict was published, declaring war on the foreign powers. It said: 'Yesterday, we received the official note of Diusheilar (the French consul in Tianjin—*Ed.*), which contained the demand that our troops abandon the forts of Dagou and turn them over [to foreigners], failing which they would be taken by force.... We have never contravened proprieties in our relations with foreigners, while they, who profess to be civilised states, behaved uncereceremoniously and brazenly, relying on the force of arms, and have on their own initiative broken off relations.'³⁵

The foreign offensive on Dagou and capture of its forts had thus ended the empress dowager's hesitation. Foreign diplomats were sent a note of the Qing government, ordering them to leave Beijing for Tianjin within 24 hours. When the foreign envoys refused to comply, the court ordered Dong Fuxiang's troops and the Yihetuan to besiege the diplomatic quarter.

By an edict of 21 June, the throne officially commended the activity of the Yihetuan and issued an instruction to comfort and encourage them. Still, reluctant to give the rebels a free hand, another imperial edict issued the next day placed them under the control of the authorities. On the pretext that the rebels had no single leadership, they were put under the command of high-ranking Manchu dignitaries: Prince Zhuang (Zai Xun) and Vice-Chancellor Gang Yi. On 23 June, the viceroys and governors of all provinces were ordered 'to summon the Yihetuan to repulse the danger from outside'.³⁶

In other edicts, Cixi 'graciously bestowed' rice, money, and old arms on the Yihetuan. The Yihetuan society gained legal status, and the alliance of the Qing government with the rebels was publicly proclaimed. Government troops were instructed to operate in co-ordination with the Yihetuan.

The collaboration of government troops and Boxers had, in effect, begun on 17 June, for on that day a band of more than a hundred rebels participated in the defence of Dagou. On that day, too, government troops had backed up the Yihetuan besieging Zizhulin, the foreign concession in Tianjin. On 18 June, the Yihetuan and the troops of Dong Fuxiang attacked Langfang station, encircling Admiral Seymour's detachment. The ensuing battle, in which some 2,000 Boxers and Dong's soldiers were engaged, lasted for over two hours. Together with a Boxer attack on Yangcun station it sealed the fate of Seymour's expedition. On 19 June, the remnants of his detachment withdrew hastily along the Grand Canal. Not until 26 June, when Seymour received aid from troops that had landed at Dagou, did he finally manage to return to Tianjin. Foreign casualties were 62 dead and 312 wounded.

The alliance of the Qing government and the Yihetuan, and the eruption of war against the powers drew large sections of the common people into the anti-imperialist struggle. Artisans, notably blacksmiths, made swords and lances for the Boxers. Witnesses attest that in the Tianjin area the Yihetuan 'have asked blacksmiths to forge iron swords for them. Even the smallest smithies are busy day and night.'³⁷ The same was true of the capital, where 'all smithies were swamped with orders for knives and swords'.³⁸ The regular army, too, was active in the fight against the foreign powers.

Many prominent Manchu and Chinese officials no longer disguised their sympathy for the Boxers. Yihetuan 'altars' sprang up in the homes of Manchu noblemen. Contemporaries testified that 'the retinue of the imperial court is learning the devices of fisticuffs'.³⁹ Zhili viceroy Yu Lu changed his attitude too. On 15 June, in a memorial to the emperor, he had pleaded for permission to suppress the movement, while on the 20th he made clear that the external danger was making him consent to alliance with it.

The bulk of the Chinese bourgeoisie, however, looked askance at the Boxer uprising. The Boxers' connivance with the Manchu court, their conservatism and mysticism, and their blind hatred of overseas culture, which was akin to renouncing progress in general—this the liberal reformers, to say nothing of the Chinese bourgeois revolutionaries, could not stomach.

The outbreak of the war with the foreign powers extended the Yihetuan movement territorially. In Shanxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces, and in parts of North-East

China and Inner Mongolia, the populace ransacked missionary institutions, drove out foreign merchants, and so on. The slogan on all lips was, 'Support the Qing, death to foreigners'. The authorities reacted to the anti-foreign riots variously in different localities. In the north-eastern provinces, some officials encouraged the activity against foreigners. Yu Xian, governor of Shanxi, where the anti-foreign movement was strong, sided with the Boxers. They were given a free hand, and destroyed 70 churches and killed more than 150 foreigners. In the North-East, foreigners were exposed to attacks in the towns—in Mukden (Shenyang), Jilin, Tsitsihar, and Tieling, among others. Russian builders and guards were driven away from the Chinese Eastern Railway, and nearly 1,000 km of track was torn up.

Leading Chinese officials in East and South China, who had business ties with foreigners, and provincial viceroys Li Hongzhang, Liu Kunyi, and Zhang Zhidong, and Inspector-General of Railways Sheng Xuanhuai were, on the other hand, dead set against the Yihetuan. Again and again, they tried to convince the government that it should suppress the 'mutineers'. And in their own domain they took all possible steps to avert anti-foreign disturbances.

Ignoring the throne's declaration of war, the viceroys of the south-eastern provinces held separate talks with foreign consuls on 26 June to work out the principles of joint defence. Rules for the protection of Shanghai and areas along the Yangzi were worked out, under which the viceroys would guard the Yangzi valley while foreign forces guarded Shanghai's international settlement. Xu Yingkui, the viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang, accepted the Rules on 30 June, the governor of Zhejiang, Liu Shutang, on 2 July, and the governor of Shandong, Yuan Shikai, on 7 July. They also endeavoured to win over officials in the North-East.

Though the authorities in East and South China did not succeed in wholly averting popular unrest, they managed with foreign help to blunt its edge.

Despite the declaration of war, the Qing court did not break off diplomatic relations with the powers, and repeatedly sent notes to them through its envoys, apologising for acts committed by the Boxers. On 29 June 1900, Qing ministers abroad received an imperial edict instructing them to explain the sense of the measures taken by the court. Its friendly treatment of the Yihetuan the court ascribed to its inability to cope with them. The Qing grovelled at the feet of the powers and, in effect, betrayed their allies, the Boxers, by saying: 'How could China mount military operations simultaneously against all states? After all, one must measure one's strength! Still less could it go against all states relying on the strength of mutineers. All foreign states must understand [the actions of the Qing govern-

ment] correctly for they were taken under pressure of circumstances.⁴⁰ The foreign powers were sent official notes explaining the policy of Cixi's government. Later, too, after Tianjin fell and the Boxers' siege of the diplomatic quarter in Beijing continued, the embattled diplomats regularly received provisions and fruit sent by the court.

The Qing did their utmost to restrain the rebels, and to prevent them from turning their arms against the ruling dynasty and local feudalists. On 27 July, the Yihetuan agreed to accept the rules specially drawn up by the government officials appointed to lead them. The rules confirmed the legality of the Yihetuan sect and acknowledged its patriotic nature. Yet, they set rigid limits to the behaviour of the Boxers and put them under control of the local authorities. The rules channelled the rebels' struggle along a strictly delimited course. 'The Yihetuan,' the document said, 'being obedient to the will of Heaven and venerating Buddhism, shall kill foreigners and exterminate native Christians.... Nothing else should exist for the Yihetuan.'⁴¹ While formally maintaining its alliance with the rebels, the government sought to expose them to the deadly fire of foreign guns and rifles. On a few occasions, too, government soldiers aimed their fire at their allies instead of aiming at foreign troops.

The Yihetuan were not always inclined to suffer the role of a subordinate ally. When the chief of Tianjin county forbade them to manufacture their own weapons, they ignored his order as they would a 'scrap of paper'. They defied officials, freed their mates from prison cells, and set up 'altars' in the yamens. Here and there, they attacked landlords and burned tenants' contracts.

On 24 June 1900, foreign troops landed at Dagou, overpowered the Qing troops and Yihetuan bands, captured Tianjin railway station, and joined the garrison of the foreign concession. On the 27th, after a five-hour battle, foreign troops captured the Eastern Arsenal, the key to the city of Tianjin, and on 14 July all Tianjin was in foreign hands. Indiscriminate shooting of the local populace ensued. Later, the intruders set up a provisional city government, consisting of a Briton, Japanese, Russian, American, German, Frenchman, and Italian, and began priming for a march on Beijing.

Officially, the powers said they were sending their troops to relieve the foreign diplomats besieged in Beijing's diplomatic quarter. In fact, however, for each power the joint armed intervention was a means to secure its own ends. The British, for example, hoped to gain a firmer hold on Central and South China, and were tightening their ties with the respective viceroys. They hoped to turn them against the throne and set up one or several puppet governments. The Germans and French, however, anticipated Britain's move, and sent warships to Shanghai not only to forestall disorders, but also to

abort the British plan.

The German bourgeoisie hoped to extend their influence from Shandong province, on which they had a tight grip, to the entire region from the Grand Canal to the Yangzi estuary. Giving voice to the imperialist ambitions of Western capitalists, Baron von Ketteler, the German minister in Beijing, had declared at a conference of the diplomatic corps in May 1900 that it was 'high time to start partitioning China'.⁴²

The U.S. government had two things in mind when it joined in the intervention. It feared, first of all, that the Yihetuan uprising might give the impulse for revolutionary struggles to break out elsewhere in Asia. At the same time, by asserting the principle of China's territorial integrity it hoped to win influence at the Qing court and acquire new privileges. It betrayed its intentions in August and November 1900, when it twice asked for a coaling station on the China coast—first in Qinwangdao and then in Sanshawan. The other powers, however, would not let it have its way.

Tsarist Russia's policy was tailored to fit the interests of Russian capitalists in Manchuria, where the Chinese Eastern Railway was then under construction. Taking advantage of the Boxer uprising, tsarist troops occupied China's north-eastern provinces. And after the uprising was squashed, the tsar's envoys launched separate negotiations with the Qing government. Strong resistance by the other powers, however, foiled their plans.

The Japanese government, for its part, was hoping to strengthen its hand in North China, and also to gain more elbow-room in Manchuria.

The brave resistance of the Yihetuan and the serious differences between the powers themselves, prevented them, in the final analysis, from attaining their goal—the partitioning of China which their governments were after in their own different ways.

On 3 August 1900, the eight-power allied army, that of Britain, France, Germany, the U.S.A., Russia, Japan, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, numbering more than 20,000 men under the command of German Fieldmarshal Alfred Waldersee, started its march on the Chinese capital, where Li Bingheng, who had come to Beijing at the end of July, was put in command of the defending Chinese troops.

On 4 August, the invading force approached Beicang, and engaged its defenders in a hard-fought battle. At the height of the fighting, General Ma Yukun ordered a retreat, and was the first of the Chinese officers to flee to Wuqingxian. On 6 August, the invaders reached Yangcun, defended by the troops of viceroy Yu Lu and General Song Qing. The battle that ensued here also ended in defeat for the Chinese. Yu Lu committed suicide, while Song Qing fled to Caicun,

which he hastily abandoned at the approach of the allied force. On 11 August, after the fall of Hexiwu, Li Bingheng took his life, and the government troops were left without a commander.

Encountering no resistance at Tongzhou, the interventionist troops approached Beijing on 13 August. Despite the desperate fight put up by its garrison, which was aided by the Yihetuan, the capital fell on the following day. In a matter of days, the foreign force ransacked the old city, cleaning out all repositories of treasure. The imperial palaces, where countless unique articles and works of Chinese and world art were stored, suffered the worst damage. Allied commanders sent details in all directions to pursue and arrest Boxers, and to punish the populace. In time the repressions grew in scale, and became especially brutal with the arrival of German Fieldmarshal Waldersee in Beijing at the end of September 1900. On his orders, German units engaged in systematic mopping-up expeditions in the Zhengding-Zhangjiakou-Shanhaiguan area, where people were summarily executed on the slightest suspicion of having belonged to or comforted the Yihetuan. Western soldiers set fire to buildings, and sacked entire villages.

Defeat of the Yihetuan Uprising

The throne appointed Li Hongzhang and Yi Kuang to negotiate peace with the foreign powers, while Cixi and her retinue, including Emperor Guangxu (who was still a prisoner) fled west first to Taiyuan and then on to Xian. On 7 September 1900, an imperial rescript laid the blame for the situation in the country on the Boxers and instructed officials to deny them mercy. 'The chief culprits of the events who have, in effect, brought about the present situation, are the Yihetuan. Now it is entirely clear that if we want to tear out the roots and seal up the source of the evil, we must [destroy the Yihetuan] without mercy,'⁴³ the rescript said, spelling the end of the Qing government's co-operation with the Boxers. Learning once more that the Western intruders were too strong for them to expel, the Qing betrayed their rebel 'allies' without compunction. In the next several months, the court heaped all sorts of denunciations on the Yihetuan, publishing rescript after rescript (on 12 and 20 September, and repeatedly in November 1900), ordering their annihilation. Doing what the court bid them, Qing generals held wholesale executions of Yihetuan. More than a hundred were beheaded in Ansu county, Zhili province, alone.

Local authorities followed suit. In Shanxi province, where Yu Xian was replaced by a new governor, and in the North-East, the Yihetuan were brutally persecuted. On capitulating to the foreign

powers, the Qing joined them in putting down the massive Yihetuan movement, which had its roots in the thick of the people.

Though after the fall of Beijing and their betrayal by the Qing government, most Yihetuan had left the battlefield, some bands still continued their fight against the foreign intruders. In Zhili and Shanxi provinces the struggle was stubborn to the end. Boxer units operated in more than 30 counties of Zhili. They would not stay long in one place, moving from county to county and in August engaged the foreign troops in the vicinity of Zhaitang (west of Beijing), attacking foragers in the metropolitan area the following month, and then falling upon signals and pioneer units. In October, there were several clashes in the counties of Shulu and Dingxian, and in the environs of Baoding.

Despite the fierce reprisals of local authorities, the Yihetuan force in Shanxi was still considerable. An interventionist unit that attempted entering the province in November encountered determined resistance. At some points in the North-East, the rebels' fight against tsarist troops lasted until March 1901. In Hailong county, the peasants headed by their leader Liu Danzi, fought on and on with heroic desperation.

When the Boxers saw that the Qing government was betraying them and would no longer fight the invading powers, they removed their slogan of supporting the throne. In Shanxi province, in August 1900, they issued a new motto, 'Long live China, death to foreigners!' In June 1901, in Sichuan province, where local troops and Yihetuan bands had gathered after their defeat, the slogan was expanded to read, 'Down with the Qing, death to foreigners, long live China!' It was highly popular after the throne concluded peace with the foreign powers, and especially in 1902, when a wide-ranging movement erupted in the country against the 'Boxer indemnities'.

But after the fall of the capital the people's movement in North China was no longer as vigorous as it had been between April and August. The widely dispersed bands of Yihetuan that had escaped the punitive expeditions of the Qing troops and the foreign interventionists, retreated to Shanxi and Inner Mongolia, and thereupon scattered across other provinces.

Having suppressed the Boxers and brought the Qing government to its knees, the foreign powers spelled out the agenda of the peace talks in a note dated 24 December. Owing to dissent among the powers (with the tsarist and American governments motivated by selfish ends to favour milder terms, while the German government insisted on severe reprisals), and to the renitency of the Qing, the negotiations took up nearly a year. The controversy raged chiefly over two issues: punishment of Qing dignitaries and generals whom the powers thought responsible for the Yihetuan movement, and

the size of the indemnity. Ultimately, the powers compelled the Qing government to comply with nearly all their demands. In February 1901, an imperial rescript condemned to death Prince Zhuang and the grandees Ying Nian, Gang Yi (posthumously), Zhao Shuqiao, Yu Xian, Dong Fuxiang, Li Bingheng (posthumously), Xu Tong (posthumously), his son Xu Chengyu, and Qi Xiu. In the case of the princes Duan and Zai Lan, the death sentence was commuted to lifelong exile in Xingjiang. And in August 1901, the government published another rescript punishing 119 provincial officials.

On 7 September 1901, Li Hongzhang and Grand Duke Qing signed a peace instrument (the Final Protocol), which in effect sealed China's semi-colonial status. Upon the people of China fell the tremendous burden of an indemnity of 450 million *liang* of silver payable in 39 years at an annual interest of 4 per cent, which ran to the fantastic total of nearly 1,000 million *liang*. The Qing government was forbidden to import arms (Art. 5) and was committed to tearing down the Dagou forts (Art. 8). Foreign troops were allowed to occupy a number of points in North China 'to maintain free communications between the capital and the sea' (Art. 9).⁴⁴ Article 11 was fraught with grave dangers for the national economy. It obliged the Qing government to come to terms with the foreign governments concerning 'modifications in the tracts on trade and navigation, and on other subjects bearing on trade relations in order to ease them'.⁴⁵ The powers were also bent on debasing the national feelings of the Chinese; they required the Qing to send embassies to Germany and Japan 'to express regret'⁴⁶ over the killings of Ketteler and Sugiyama in Beijing during the uprising, and to prohibit civil examinations in towns where any foreigners had been killed.

Under the peace terms, foreigners were permitted to build a fortified Legation Quarter in Beijing, which meant, in effect, that there would be 'a state within a state'. The erection of the Legation Quarter cost the Chinese people dearly. Some 1,400 houses were torn down on its site, worth roughly 350,000 *liang*.

Owing to differences among themselves, the foreign powers did not dismantle the Qing monarchy. Having kept in the saddle by heaping cruel reprisals on the Boxers, the Qing government headed by Cixi returned to the capital in January 1902, and obediently followed the policy that the imperialists wanted it to follow.

The Yihetuan movement, directed primarily against imperialist oppression in China, was a movement of the mass of the people. But the conditions in which it arose had not been ripe for success. The ideological and organisational faults of the Boxers, coupled with the double dealing of the Manchu rulers, had doomed it to failure.

A group of leading Chinese feudalists, including most of the viceroys and governors in South, Central, and East China, made common

cause with the foreign powers to prevent the uprising from spreading to the rest of China.

The peasant rebels, lacking warcraft, armed with primitive weapons, relying chiefly on spells and amulets, and put under the control of defeatist Qing officials, were unable to withstand the onslaught of well-armed interventionist troops.

The anti-imperialist struggle of the Chinese people, which the imperialists suppressed by overwhelming military force, evoked a warm response and the sympathy of the international working-class movement. Lenin reacted to the events in China with a condemnatory article in the first issue of the *Iskra* newspaper. He expressed sympathy for the Chinese people on behalf of Russia's Social-Democrats and wide sections of the working people, and exposed the colonialist nature of the predacious policy of the powers. In an article entitled 'The War in China', published in December 1900, the proletarian leader wrote: 'How can the Chinese not hate those who have come to China solely for the sake of gain; who have utilised their vaunted civilisation solely for the purpose of deception, plunder, and violence; who have waged wars against China in order to win the right to trade in opium with which to drug the people ... who hypocritically carried on their policy of plunder under the guise of spreading Christianity?'⁴⁷

Lenin called for international solidarity and for struggle against the true enemies of the workers of the world. 'The duty of all class-conscious workers,' he wrote, 'is to rise with all their might against those who are stirring up national hatred and diverting the attention of the working people from their real enemies.'⁴⁸ Voices protesting the bloody adventure of the imperialists in China resounded in Germany and France, where spokesmen of the social-democratic and socialist parties came forward in defence of the people of China.

Chapter 12

THE NEW POLICY OF THE QING COURT AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATIONS 1901-1904

The Boxer uprising and the aggression of the imperialist powers which culminated in the 1901 Final Protocol, sealing China's fate as a semicolonial country, coupled with the rapid dislocation of the country's finances and economy, brought all classes and social strata into a state of seething unrest, and caused a realignment within the ruling camp. The process spurred the emergence and political consolidation of various forces opposed to the Manchu regime.

Realignment Within the Ruling Camp and the New Policy

The empress dowager's Manchu clique, whose policy was in disfavour all over the country, found itself isolated from a considerable section of Chinese feudalists. Held in disfavour by the foreign powers as well, it elicited undisguised opposition among influential forces inside the country. The rebellion of the Independence Army in the Yangzi valley and the convocation of the Zhangyuan parliament in Shanghai, both organised by members of the Protect the Emperor Society and other groups of reformers, were evidence of mounting disaffection among Chinese bourgeois landlord elements. The revolt in the South organised by Sun Yatsen's Revive China Society and the quickly spreading sympathy with revolutionary methods spoke of strong anti-Manchu feelings among the Chinese national bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, Cixi's ultra-conservative group was faced with dissent within the ruling camp, with acts of insubordination by viceroys in some of the provinces south of the Yangzi in the summer of 1900 jeopardising its rule. The defeat of the Manchu forces by the greatly outnumbered eight-power expeditionary corps demonstrated the weakness of the backward Chinese army and its inability to stand up to a well trained armed force equipped with modern weapons.

The country's finances were in a shambles. The huge military expenditures—incurred in the attempt to put down the rebellious Yihetuan, and then in the short-lived operations against the eight-power expeditionary corps—drained the treasury completely. To make sure that China paid its latest, very sizeable, indemnity, the powers established controls over the country's chief sources of revenue. From 1901 on, the Qing government had nothing but the land tax and the *liqin* left to dispose of on its own. New sources of revenue, therefore, were needed to pay indemnities and the interest on loans, to stabilise the situation, and to buttress the army and the state machine.

In this tense situation, the more far-sighted members of the conservative group—Rong Lu and a number of top Manchu and Chinese dignitaries—saw that to retain their hold on power they would have to make certain concessions and changes to temper the discontent both of the foreigners and of various forces inside the country. An imperial edict was issued on 30 August 1900, referring in most general terms to the need for reform. Suiting tradition, the edict (issued in Emperor Guangxu's name by the Empress Dowager) appealed to 'capable and knowledgeable officials', to all subjects, to present their recommendations to the throne in order 'to eliminate evil in administrative matters'.

In January 1901 in Xian, where the court was installed since it had fled Beijing before the foreign intruders, another imperial edict was published, ushering in a period of cosmetic reforms known as the New Policy (*xin zheng*). In April, a Committee for Matters of Government was instituted as the chief conductor of that policy, charged with collecting and examining memorials containing reform recommendations. In due course, it would submit to the court a reform project and the blueprint of how to go about putting it into effect. At the head of the Committee the throne put Prince Qing. Prominent Manchu grandees of the empress dowager's party (Rong Lu, etc.) were put on the Committee, as were the provincial viceroys Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi, who represented the other group in the ruling camp, that of Chinese feudalists and compradores. The inclusion of the latter two, like the reinstatement in high posts of other Chinese dignitaries, was an attempt by Cixi's group to eliminate the schism that split the ruling camp in 1900.

The feudal compradore group in the ruling camp—which expressed the interests of the Chinese landlords, the upper echelon of the Chinese bureaucracy, and the militarists—had fairly close links with foreign interests, and was as eager as the conservative Manchu nobility to preserve the existing order. Unlike the Manchus, however, it tolerated closer contacts with the foreign powers, favoured a more flexible domestic policy, and sought cosmetic reforms. In 1901 the

most prominent spokesman of this group was General Yuan Shikai, appointed viceroy of the metropolitan province following the death of Li Hongzhang (as willed by the latter on his deathbed). Thereupon, arrogating one position after another—those of governor of railways (in 1902), counsellor of the Government Committee, commissioner for commercial affairs, director of the Steamship Company, director-general of the postal and telegraph service (1903), first counsellor of the Army Reform Committee and commander-in-chief of the New Army (1904)—Yuan Shikai amassed tremendous power, and thereby considerably strengthened and expanded the influence of the Beiyang militarist clique over which he had inherited control from Li Hongzhang. Fawning on the court and on foreigners, applying force, bribery, and intrigue, he had his own men in the army and government, and continued to escalate his power.

In Yuan Shikai and the feudal compradore group, the court found a force that helped it restore contacts with the foreign powers and willing to carry through a moderate reform programme without injuring the position of the Manchus. Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi submitted what are known as the three joint memorials of the viceroys of Lianghu and Liangjiang, outlining the basic provisions of reform.

The first in the series of institutional reforms concerned the Zongli yamen. By imperial decree, a ministry of foreign affairs modelled on the European pattern and headed by Prince Qing replaced the archaic central office in charge of foreign relations. The move showed that the New Policy was aimed at regaining the support of the foreign powers. Besides, the demand for a foreign ministry to be set up was contained in a special clause (clause 12) of the 1901 Final Protocol, because institutions like the Zongli yamen with their endless red tape and delays, their clumsy and narrow-minded officials, prevented any prompt handling of the various foreign demands.

Seeking to invigorate and modernise the ineffectual administration, and acting on the recommendations of the Committee for Matters of Government, the throne issued a series of edicts reducing the inflated central and local administrations, and purging provincial and county institutions of officials 'who are addicted to abusing power'. A number of sinecures were abolished at the court itself and in the provinces, and in 1903 the throne liquidated the Supervisorate of the Heir Apparent and the Special Office for the Transmission of Government Correspondence.

A group of officials was appointed to draw up recommendations for the revision and reform of the medieval judiciary, and in 1902 and 1903 the abolition was announced of the more barbarian and outdated investigative methods and of cruel torture. The court set out to modernise the police force so as to 're-establish and buttress

peace and order'. A ministry of police was constituted in 1905 (renamed the ministry of the interior in 1906), and Chinese General Xu Shichang, who was close to Yuan Shikai, was put at its head. The police force in the large cities was restructured.

The Qing court and the Committee for Matters of Government counted on the army reform to really strengthen the position of the ruling camp. The reform was carried out with great thoroughness and consumed the bulk of the funds earmarked for the New Policy. In the summer of 1901 viceroys and governors were instructed to overhaul the provincial troops in their charge, that is, disband inefficient units, and reconstitute the available troops along European and Japanese lines. The archaic officers' examinations (weightlifting and archery tests) were abolished, and modern military academies set up. All the subsequent innovations were largely associated with Yuan Shikai. Referring to the experience of the Beiyang army—its methods of recruitment, training, and organisation—he submitted a memorial on how to reform the old army and activate a New Army on the scale of the empire. In place of the mercenary troops formed in the provinces under viceroys and governors, he envisaged countrywide conscription, and activation of new provincial units along semi-voluntary lines under a single command based at Beijing. Not all the elements of his project were adopted, and Yuan Shikai continued modernising and augmenting his own troops out of the funds of the metropolitan province and funds coming in from other parts of the country.

In 1904, a Government Committee for the Reorganisation of the Army was established in Beijing, with Prince Qing in charge and Yuan Shikai a member and first counsellor. The following year, the court endorsed the reorganisation plan and a new system of structuring the armed forces. Under the plan, the newly activated formations ('new troops' or units of the New Army) were divided into regular infantry and garrison troops. By 1912, or 1913 at the latest, it was planned to have 36 divisions of the New Army (including Yuan Shikai's Beiyang troops). It was to be a mercenary army, with recruits being required to read and write, to have property status calculated by their land tax, or to have landed property (in the North a holding equivalent to that of a prosperous peasant, and in the South to that of at least a small landlord), and to present a letter of introduction from county or prefectural authorities or persons of substance. This, the throne hoped, would keep undesirable elements out of the army—its most important power base.

The drain on the treasury caused by the mounting outlays for rearming and restructuring the army compelled the Qing to revise their former attitude to the bourgeoisie, for attempts at increasing revenue by raising old taxes and introducing new ones had elicited alarm up and down the country. In some cases, even top provincial

authorities had protested. Carrying an insupportable burden of taxes, augmented by contributions to sums paid as indemnities (including indemnities imposed on individual provinces), the populace was no longer able to take on any new impositions. The viceroys of Yangtze valley provinces rebelled against the suggestion of Customs Inspector-General Robert Hart, made to the court in 1902, to raise the land tax. In memorials dating to 1901 and 1902, prominent members of the two groups within the ruling camp named higher taxation of commercial and industrial undertakings as a new and sure source of additional revenue. 'The treasury,' read one memorial, 'is in a state of penury, and it is exceedingly difficult to collect money.... It is high time to take advantage of the resources of the commercial estate and to have the greatest possible number of its members contribute.'

In 1903, a ministry of commerce was established by imperial edict, and the Manchu Zai Zhen was put at its head. He was instructed to draw up statutes regulating commercial and industrial activity, and in every way to encourage investment in industry and trade. Special officials were appointed in the provinces, responsible to the ministry and the local authorities, to issue licences to merchants and industrialists. In 1903 and 1904, on the recommendation of the ministry of commerce, the court published regulations governing chambers of commerce and industry in provincial seats and bigger cities, and approved charters for various joint-stock companies and commercial societies, and statutes to govern the activity of firms. This laid the foundation for commercial and industrial legislation. In 1904, draft statutes governing banking were published, and the Government Bank (Daiqing) with assets of 4 million *liang* was founded the following year. A number of edicts referred to minting, and in the period from 1903 to 1905 a series of decrees was issued by the court and the ministry of commerce to regulate mining, agriculture and land use, including prescriptions to draw up a national cadastre and orders repealing bans on the cultivation of areas, mountains and hills that had been held sacred as sites of ancestor worship or of other religious rites.

The new imperial commercial and industrial policy was a concession to the growing Chinese bourgeoisie, and at once an attempt to dampen its discontent with the perverse abuses and unrestricted powers of local and central authorities. Encouragement of entrepreneurship, the Qing expected, would widen the power base of their regime and win over the economically strongest groups of merchants and industrialists.

One act of encouragement was to proclaim that henceforth merchants and industrialists would be conferred honorary titles and offices. The charters of joint-stock companies (approved by the court in 1903), for example, provided for the rank of counsellor 1st

class of the ministry of commerce and for the title of official of the 1st degree, along with a copy of the imperial seal and a large emblem of the firm, to be conferred by the emperor on every entrepreneur who amassed a capital of 50 million *yuan*. All in all, the charters provided for twelve different awards for successful commercial or industrial activity.

The restructuring and modernisation of the government apparatus required personnel with a Western education. This impelled a series of educational reforms. An imperial edict of 1901, which went into force the following year, modified county and provincial civil service examinations. The eight-legged essays which hundreds of generations of examination candidates had had to write over the centuries, were abolished. In the new examination programme precedence was given to the political history of China, and the history and science of Western countries.

In September 1901, the throne decreed the institution in provinces of schools of three grades—primary, secondary, and higher. The new school regulations were modelled on the project drafted by Yuan Shikai for schools in Shandong. Graduates of secondary and higher schools, like licentiates of the old-style civil service examinations, were entitled to serve in official positions. The two systems of education co-existed until 1905, when the old-style examinations were suspended 'for an indefinite time'.

The Hanlin Academy, which had supplied the court with top-rank officials, was required 'to pay attention to practical and natural sciences in order to meet the needs of the court and government', and to introduce the study of economics. The educational system was taken out of the control of the Board of Rites and put into the charge of a committee for educational affairs. Two years later, in 1905, the committee was reorganised into a ministry of education, headed by the Manchu Rong Qing.

In October 1902, the government ordered provincial authorities to select gifted young men who had proved their mettle in examinations or during study at new schools, and to send them to continue their education abroad at the expense of the treasury. The bulk was sent to Japan. The first group of 31 had, indeed, gone to that country in 1901, and only 16 to Europe. To encourage study abroad, the court announced that graduates returning from Japanese educational establishments who had paid for their own education could also count on employment in the civil service. As a result, the number of Chinese students in Japan rose swiftly—from some 1,300 in 1904 to as many as 8,000 in 1905.

Though on the face of it the New Policy referred to a fairly extensive area of economic, political, and cultural matters, the reforms were no more than a face-lifting, and failed to resolve any of the

problems that had necessitated them. None of the crucial issues with a bearing on the country's national independence and progress was dealt with radically enough. Besides, many of the reforms promised by the court in its edicts and manifestos were no more than pie in the sky. Nearly all reforms, apart from the army reorganisation, were carried out half-heartedly, with officials dragging their feet, and this on instructions of the authorities. In a special prescription to viceroy Zhang Zhidong, for example, Cixi enjoined him to act with extreme caution, and to do things gradually, little by little, not overnight, and not everywhere.

The thoroughly rotten bureaucratic machine and the thoroughly corrupt, sluggish officials were apt to make even the best-intentioned undertakings counter-productive. The reforms and the fund-raising to carry them out were exploited by most officials as a source of personal gain to the extreme vexation of the populace. Many, too, were the cases when conservative officials, especially those in remote provinces, refused to follow the orders of ministries and of the Committee for Matters of Government.

Neither did the New Policy eliminate the differences within the ruling camp. Though the reforms suited the blueprints drawn up by the feudal compradore group, and were, in most cases, carried out by members of that group, the Empress Dowager's party sought to buttress its own positions, and to retain control over all key spheres. Prince Qing, a Manchu, was appointed head of the new ministry of foreign affairs and concurrently of the government committee for the reorganisation of the army. The Manchu Zai Zhen, a relative of the empress dowager, was put at the head of the new ministry of commerce. The imperial Military Council was left intact, and retained all its previous influence. Though a number of edicts equalised the rights of Manchus and Chinese, and though the prohibition of marriage between Manchus and Chinese was revoked in 1902, the former still enjoyed considerable privileges in the army, government, local administrations, and courts of law. In the summer of 1903, the empress dowager instructed Tie Liang, a Manchu who was later made head of the war ministry, and Yuan Shikai to raise the efficiency of the Manchu eightbanner corps in the metropolitan province, and allowed for requisite reforms.

The court's reforms of 1901-1905 came too late. Only a few years before, at the time of the Hundred Days of Reform, the Qing's willingness to carry out reforms and to make concessions to the new social forces could have earned the throne some moral credit, at least for a certain time. But after the humiliating surrender to the imperialist powers in 1900-1901, the New Policy was received as a sign of weakness and only added to the general disaffection.

Imperialist Aggressiveness Continues Unabated

Though the powers had proclaimed the open door doctrine and the principle of China's territorial integrity, and though Western ministers in Beijing had pledged when signing the 1901 Final Protocol to abstain from separate actions, this was certainly no evidence of any moderation of inter-imperialist contradictions in the Far East. None of the imperialist powers had given up its intention to exercise monopoly rule within its sphere of influence and put the regions concerned under its military and administrative control.

Russo-Japanese differences over the North-East provinces had grown visibly even before the 1901 Protocol was signed. Making the most of the eight-power intervention, the tsarist government brought in troops on the excuse of putting down the Yihetuan. In exchange for supporting Cixi it hoped to gain new concessions and secure a position of dominance in the North-East provinces. The Qing court, on the other hand, expected the Russian claims to arouse the objections of the other European powers, the United States and Japan, and thereby enable it to minimise its concessions to Russia.

Under a Russo-Chinese convention on Manchuria, signed in April 1902, Russia acknowledged the Qing government's right to exercise its governmental and administrative powers in the region, and agreed to a three-phased withdrawal of its troops (in the course of 18 months), though during the period of occupation the strength of Qing troops in Manchuria would depend on the approval of the tsarist authorities. Furthermore, the Qing were pledged to co-ordinate with Russia all matters related to railway construction in South Manchuria. Goaded by adventuresome elements who expected to profit from the development of the North-East provinces, and indeed also of Korea, the tsarist government was farthest from the thought of relinquishing any of its vantage points. In April 1903, before the second phase of the Russian troop pull-out was to begin, the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs received a Russian note requiring new 'guarantees' before the troops would go home. The Qing court had to promise it would not give away territory in Manchuria to other countries, and would not appoint nationals of other countries to any administrative posts there. The Russian chargé d'affaires in Beijing let Prince Qing know in a secret note that any further withdrawal of Russian troops would depend on the tractability of the Manchu court.

The other imperialist powers soon learned of the tsarist government's demands. Word of them also spread among the Chinese. The wave of anger inside the country, and the official protests and warnings of the other foreign powers, compelled the Qing to turn down the tsarist exactions. The tsar responded by setting up a Far

Eastern Governorship in August 1903, with its head, Admiral E.I. Alexeyev, being instructed to negotiate directly with the Qing court.

Japan was no idle onlooker. With tsarist Russia pushing forward, it, too, redoubled its thrusts into North China and Manchuria. Its aim was to strengthen its grip on Korea and to develop that country as a military and economic base for another assault on China and for penetration into South Manchuria. And Japan was being backed by Britain and the United States, because the former hoped with Japanese help to halt the progress of its chief rival, Russia, while the latter expected—also with Japanese help—to get into Manchuria and then into the Russian Far East.

The Anglo-Japanese treaty of 30 January 1902 was distinctly anti-Russian. So was the stand taken by the United States and Germany in a succession of government statements backing claims tendered by Japan's expansionist elements. The Japanese were being egged on to a war with Russia.

In the talks that Japan opened with Russia in the summer of 1903, as a diplomatic screen for its war preparations, it went far beyond the Korean issue, and indeed asked for access to Manchuria on equal terms with Russia.

In the circumstances, the Qing government endeavoured to capitalise on the differences between the powers, acting on its old maxim of 'using barbarians to control barbarians'. Its declared 'neutrality' during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was another sign of its nearly total impotence. The hostilities proceeded chiefly in the thus 'neutral' Manchuria, Liaodong peninsula, and China's territorial waters. The local population—Chinese, Manchurian, and Mongolian—was thus left to suffer the ravages of a war that was not of its making, a war between two imperialist predators. The control over South Manchuria, most of which had originally been occupied by Russian troops, passed gradually—as the Japanese armies advanced—into the hands of Japan. In early May 1904, the Japanese force-crossed the Yalu river from Korea, while two Japanese armies landed in the northern part of Liaodong peninsula, captured Dairen, and laid siege to Port Arthur. By the spring of 1905, the Japanese held all South Manchuria, and the Qing dynasty, in effect, lost sovereign powers over the so-called three eastern provinces.

Taking advantage of the Russo-Japanese collision in North-East China, the British tried to make Tibet a protectorate. In 1900-1901, the British government had sent letters to Lhasa, seeking to establish relations with the Tibetan government. But the Dalai Lama, who feared British influence would grow, returned the letters unopened. To offset the British bid, the feudal theocratic authorities in Lhasa tried to win tsarist Russia's support. In 1900 and again in 1902,

an adviser of the Dalai Lama and a mission visited Russia. This, however, served as a formal pretext for a British invasion of Tibet.

In early 1902, acting on instructions from London, George Curzon, Viceroy of India, sent a military expedition to the borders of Tibet on a reconnaissance mission. In the meantime, military and political preparations were set in motion—roads were being built in Sikkim, Indian troops reinforced, and public opinion conditioned to the 'Russian threat to India'.

In June 1903, a British military unit under Colonel F.E. Younghusband thrust into Tibetan territory near the town of Kamba without sanction of the Manchu-Tibetan authorities. The pretext was to find a convenient point to negotiate revision of the ban on India's trade with Tibet. The expedition itself was named a peaceful mission with a commercial purpose. On 7 July, the 'mission' occupied Kamba, whereupon more British troops were brought in. The Manchu-Tibetan authorities disregarded British pressure and refused to negotiate. Instead, they rushed Tibetan troops to Kamba. This the British command used as a pretext for intervention. More British troops crossed into Tibet in November and December. Soon, the so-called British commercial mission was nearly 10,000-strong, with 5,000 well armed soldiers who had machine-guns and artillery.

The Tibetan force confronting the British was inadequate in all respects—numbers, training, and arms. In fact, with the entire Tibetan regular army numbering some 3,000 men scattered in different commanderies, the force that the British had to contend with was barely distinguishable from an antediluvian detachment of braves. And its defeat was hastened by Tibet's feudal fragmentation and the divisive policy of the British, who recruited pro-British elements, and fanned Tibeto-Chinese antagonisms. Unlike the Dalai Lama, who wanted Tibet to be independent, the pro-British Panchen Lama was opposed to any resistance to British troops. When reinforcements arrived in July 1904, the British captured Gyantse, and marched on Lhasa. The Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia. In August, Lhasa was occupied. The unique treasures of its lamaseries, palaces, and tombs fell prey to the incursors. Caravans laden with gold, valuables, Buddhist ritualistic articles, and antiques set off for India.

At the negotiations in Lhasa, Colonel Younghusband, chief of the British expeditionary corps, demanded that the Tibetans recognise his country's special interests in Tibet, consent to the occupation of Chumbi valley, pay an indemnity, permit the British to establish a permanent mission, and open trading marts for British goods up and down the country. The demands were so utterly humiliating that even those members of the Tibetan government who had agreed to negotiate turned them down. Not until the British exerted special pressure—taking hostages from the lamaseries and threatening to

shell Potalah, the Dalai Lama's palace held sacred in the country—did the Tibetan authorities sign a treaty on 7 September 1904.

Under the treaty, Tibet recognised the line of its border with Sikkim drawn by the British, opened marts for British trade at Gyantse and Gartok, admitted British commercial agents, and exempted British goods from any tariffs. Tibet paid Britain an indemnity of 500,000 pounds sterling, tore down all fortifications on the road from India to Lhasa, and allowed the British to occupy Chumbi valley. Furthermore, the Tibetan government pledged not to lease or concede any part of Tibetan territory to any third power without Britain's consent, and not to admit representatives of other states. To be sure, the Qing commissioner in Tibet did not sign the treaty.

The treaty failed to improve the situation of the British troops. The populace was bitterly hostile. There were attacks on British soldiers and officers. Local chiefs refused to supply the British with provisions. The fatigue that set in among the troops in the unfamiliar mountain terrain, the guerrilla actions of Tibetan detachments, compounded with the approaching and usually severe winter, compelled the British to withdraw from Central Tibet even before the signing of the 'trade regulations' coveted by London.

Subsequently, the counteraction of tsarist Russia and the growing Anglo-German differences enabled the Qing to refuse to honour the Anglo-Tibetan treaty, and to moderate its provisions in the Anglo-Chinese convention on Tibet signed at Beijing in April 1906. Here, Britain agreed to recognise China's suzerainty over Tibet, and pledged itself not to annex any of its territory and not to interfere in the affairs of the local administration. On the other hand, it in fact reserved for itself 'special rights' in Tibet.

In sum, the military expedition had enabled Britain to 'open' Tibet to British commerce, and for years 'protection of British commercial interests' was used as an excuse for fresh British acts of aggression in Tibet.

In the spring of 1904, while the British were occupied in Tibet, the German imperialists tried muscling in on their rivals in an old-time British sphere of influence, the valley of the Yangzi. The first steps to this end had been taken in 1903. Then German industrialists had, with the connivance of the provincial authorities in Zhejiang, sought to win a concession for building a railway from Pudong (in the north of Zhejiang province). In the spring of the following year, the German minister in Beijing asked the Qing government for the lease of the shore of Dongtinghu and Poyanghu, two of the largest lakes in the Yangzi valley, and for permission to station German marines and a river fleet in the area. Then, without waiting for a reply, the German authorities in Qingdao sent a naval force to the Yangzi estuary. Two

German gunboats steamed up the river, reaching Poyanghu, and to intimidate the Manchu regime staged a show of force, firing their guns.

The British government reacted instantly. A British note to China's foreign ministry demanded the lease of the Zhoushan islands. Simultaneously, British gunboats blockaded Lake Poyanghu, locking up the German warships. The United States and France followed suit, asking Beijing's permission for their own warships to enter lakes along the Yangzi. These moves, coupled with the Anglo-French agreement concluded in April 1904, which was directed against Germany, compelled the German government to back down.

Despite the assurances of the U.S. government that it would abide by the open door policy and the principle of China's territorial integrity, the U.S. Secretary of the Navy twice demanded that San-shawan in Fujian province, which was within Japan's sphere of influence, should be opened as a port of call for U.S. naval vessels. The vigorous remonstrances of the Japanese, and the hopes the U.S.A. pinned on Japan as the power that would push back Russia in South Manchuria, made the Americans withdraw their demands.

Apart from military muscle-flexing, the imperialist powers employed high-powered diplomacy to get what they wanted in China. In 1902, Britain negotiated a revision of earlier tariff agreements, and the following year Japan and the United States did the same. A tentative accord was reached to add 1.5 per cent of the value of imported goods to the existing 5 per cent tariff. On the face of it, this was in China's interests. In fact, however, it was a concession for the exemption of foreign commodities from the *lijin* tax. And since the octroi revenue went whole to the Qing authorities, while customs duties were controlled by foreigners (and were used, among other things, to pay indemnities), the gain in the affair was wholly on the side of the foreign powers.

People's Movements in China in 1901-1904

Following the suppression of the Boxer uprising, the various movements of the people shrank in scale, amounting to no more than local rebellions in various provinces. In 1901-1904, the most widespread motive for insurgency was the steep increase in taxes by the imperial treasury to raise funds to pay the new indemnities to the foreign powers, the 'compensations' to missionaries, and the cost of the New Policy.

To be sure, the Boxer movement was not yet completely dead. Though the main Yihetuan forces had been crushed in 1900-1901, dispersed detachments were still active in Shandong and Zhili, and in some western provinces. Sichuan was the scene of desperate Yihe-

tuan operations, for there the 220,000 *liang* that had to be raised annually to pay the provincial indemnity caused the tax burden to rise tenfold. The sporadic anti-missionary riots under the motto, 'Support the Qing, down with foreigners', that had occurred in the province in 1901, gave way the following year to large-scale popular risings against taxes and supplementary levies. Yihetuan arriving from the North breathed new life into the movement, and their motto, 'Down the Qing, death to foreigners', was received with acclaim.

In April 1902, a detachment of rebellious peasants attacked the county seat in Ziyang in the north of Sichuan. Yihetuan from neighbouring counties came to help. By May and June, the rising had engulfed all northern Sichuan. A large hotbed of rebellion arose in western Sichuan, where some 10,000 local rebels inflicted a series of setbacks on government troops, and blockaded the approaches to Chengdu, the provincial capital. Thereupon, the rebellion spread south-east. In September, the populace of the southern part of the province took up arms as well. Throughout the year, Sichuan was immersed in insurrection: peasants and urban poor went into battle under a variety of slogans, 'Down the Qing, death to foreigners', 'Smite the rich, help the poor', 'Abolish taxes', and 'Death to corrupt officials'. Armed rebel detachments came to grips with government troops, ransacked Christian churches, expelled foreign missionaries, and thrashed landlords, officials, and foreigners.

Alarmed by the anti-foreign complexion of the rising, Britain and France despatched troops to Chongqing and Yibih to back up the government forces. And the Qing court, frightened by the scale of the movement, dismissed the viceroy of Sichuan and replaced him with Cen Chunxuan. On Cen's orders, local landlord self-defence units concerted their efforts with those of government troops. As a result, by the end of 1902 the rebel armies were crushed. But the struggle did not end. Yihetuan detachments would mount actions here and there in the next few years.

Right up to the end of 1904, anti-missionary riots occurred in various parts of the country, combining with local risings against taxes and indemnities. A large-sized anti-foreign mutiny broke out in 1903 in the province of Zhejiang, led by Pu Zhensheng, a *shenshi*, who was head of the Baibuhui (White Sackcloth) secret society. Inciting the mass of the people with calls to expel foreigners, and finish off missionaries, the Baibuhui succeeded in rallying a force of 20,000 men, who fought successful battles across three counties and finally approached the city of Yanzhi. Then, outnumbered by government troops and yielding ground in hard-fought, sanguinary battles, they were driven into Anhui province. Pu Zhensheng was taken prisoner and flung into goal, while the remnants of his troops sought safety in the hills.

In those years, massive riots against taxes and indemnities also erupted in China's northern provinces, which had suffered the most from the government's punitive expeditions against the Boxers. In 1901-1902, the south-west of Zhili province was the scene of a rising of rural and urban poor under Jing Tingbing. Driven by despair to resist the introduction of additional taxes, they were soon joined by the more affluent sections of the population protesting against auxiliary levies. The rebel camp included rich peasants, vendors, workshop owners, and some smaller landlords and *shenshi*. The rising derived its strength from the peasant detachments of the Joint League of Villages (Lianzhuanghui), a legal organisation of propertied peasants, landlords, and *shenshi*, controlled by landlords. The rebel chief, Jing Tingbing, too, was of landlord background, held the civil service degree of *xiucai*, and had once been an official. The League had not been active at the height of the Boxer uprising, but when it saw Nie Shicheng's army destroying everything in its path as it marched across Zhili in 1901, members of the League rose to the defence of their villages. Then, as the local authorities introduced various taxes and auxiliary duties, the League came forward again to protest the payment of compensations to missionaries.

Jing Tingbing's movement originated in Guangzong county. The immediate motive for the rising was the county chief's order to double the land tax and raise funds to pay indemnities. Jing called on the people of Guangzong to ignore the order, and set out for the county seat at the head of armed detachments of the Joint League of Villages. Frightened local officials announced a partial reduction of the tax, and this seemed to settle the conflict. Jing decided that his cause had triumphed, and called off his forces. In the meantime, the Qing authorities were hastily marshalling strength to punish the mutineers. In early 1902, government troops entered Guangzong county. The rebels were taken unawares. Jing Tingbing escaped to the neighbouring county, where he gathered a peasant force and resumed the uprising under the slogan, 'Down the Qing, death to foreigners'. The insurrection spread swiftly to 24 counties, with Jing's army growing to some 350,000 men. It was joined by surviving Yihetuan units, members of secret societies, and defectors from the government army. The rebels sacked foreign missions, chastised Christian converts, and settled scores with local officials. The foreign powers demanded of the government that it put a stop to the 'disorders', and threatened to intervene. The viceroy of Zhili was given orders to subdue the rebels, first of all in the vicinity of railways and mines. In addition, a 6,000-man force consisting of German, French, and Japanese soldiers, set out for Guangzong from Beijing, co-ordinating its advance with the government troops. On 12 June, the rebel detachments were routed. Jing Tingbing, who escaped to Henan, was

apprehended and put to death. The remnants of the rebel force, however, continued the struggle for still some time.

Jing Tingbing's insurrection was echoed by popular risings in Shandong and Henan provinces. The anti-government and anti-foreign disturbances showed that the Qing were unable to put down the people's struggle even in the North, where they had concentrated most of their forces.

A new series of risings against auxiliary taxes introduced to cover the cost of the New Policy followed in 1903. A movement against a tax on locally produced wine erupted in Yongji county of Shanxi province. The populace of 18 villages converged on the county town and vented its anger on the police outside the offices of the local administration. The county chief relented, and lifted the wine tax.

Local secret societies took part in many of the anti-tax actions. In 1904, for example, peasants in Lieping county, Jiangxi province, won the backing of the local secret society when they revolted against a tax on dye making, a widespread occupation in the locality. Rioters attacked the county seat, ransacked the tax office, the customs house, the homes of *shenshi*, and settled scores with officials. Then, abandoning the town, they formed armed units and waged war on the government within the limits of the county for the next three months.

One of the biggest insurgencies of that period occurred in Guangxi. In 1900, the central government, which had previously required no revenue from that poorly developed and impoverished province, announced that henceforth a sum of 700,000 *liang* was to be collected and paid to the treasury annually. The authorities introduced eight new national and fifteen new provincial taxes. In April, the populace rebelled. The tax burden and bureaucratic oppression had become unbearable. An armed detachment of some 400 men out to 'hit the rich, and help the poor', captured the town of Xilong, and was soon joined by members of local secret societies. Among the secret society leaders was a man named Hong, who claimed to be the grandson of the Taiping chief Hong Xiuquan. This made him especially popular among the rebels. Peasants were the backbone of the rising, which was subsequently joined by deserters whose soldiers' wages had been embezzled by the Guangxi authorities. The former soldiers also formed units of their own. The rebels ransacked homes of merchants, landlord estates, and government offices. In 1901 and 1902, they gained control of 26 counties and regions in the south-west of Guangxi, and were joined by secret society detachments from neighbouring Guangdong province.

A part of the rebels, fighting under the slogan of deposing the Qing and restoring the Ming, intended to set up an independent government in Yunnan, Guangdong, and Guangxi. But the bulk

pursued the old slogan of hitting the rich and helping the poor. Their more specific demands, such as lowering taxes and repealing foreign indemnities, the rebels tried to secure by direct action. Whenever they seized larger towns, they drove out Manchu officials, disarmed garrisons, released prisoners from gaols, and imposed indemnities on merchant guilds and wealthy workshops. Some detachments (numbering 100,000 men) fought a war of manoeuvre, but dispersed swiftly among the civilian population when they ran into danger. Their weakness was that they had no central command.

Unable to cope with the insurrection, the governor asked Beijing for aid. Troops from thirteen provinces converged to subdue the rebels. In early 1903, the rising spread to the north of Guangxi province, and bitter fighting against regular troops and the landlord militia continued there until the middle of the year. In the summer, the main rebel force blockaded Guilin.

The movement hit its peak in 1904. Two rebel centres had sprung up in Guangxi—one in Liuzhou and the other in Nanning, with several detachments active in the environs of Liuzhou until May 1904. On 10 May, the local garrison mutinied. Led by Lu Yafa, soldiers cut telegraph cables, sacked the administrative building, seized 200,000 *liang* and large amounts of arms and withdrew from the city. They set up camp at Sishibatong, and joined forces with the rebels. Not until October did Qing troops manage to defeat Lu Yafa, the remnants of whose army retreated to Hunan and Guizhou provinces, recruiting reinforcements among local people.

In autumn, Qing troops mounted a succession of large-scale punitive operations at Nanning. At the same time, the authorities lavished specious promises to spare the lives of rebels who surrendered. This perfidious tactic served the government in good stead: by the end of the year the main rebel force was effectively quelled. In 1905 only a few surviving detachments were active in the mountain country.

Sun Yatsen and Zhang Taiyan, the two anti-Manchu revolutionary leaders, spoke in glowing terms of the uprising in Guangxi, and this chiefly for its anti-Manchu orientation. In fact, when the rising was at its height, revolutionaries tried to establish contacts with Lu Yafa, intending to organise joint anti-government operations. But their plans did not materialise.

Growth of the Bourgeois Landlord Opposition

The political turmoil of 1901-1904, coupled with further aggressive action by the foreign powers, propelled the growth of the bourgeois landlord opposition.

After 1901, its platform consisted of three basic planks: guarantees for private enterprise, protection of Chinese entrepreneurs from foreign competition, and elimination of the threat of popular rebellions.

Yet the movement consisted of two sections. One of them, based abroad, was associated with the names of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. It campaigned for reforms, and sought the return to power of Emperor Guangxu. For a while in 1900-1901, its leaders had hoped that the foreign powers, dissatisfied with Cixi and her clique, would make her abdicate power in Guangxu's favour. These hopes were dashed when Cixi returned to the imperial capital with full powers, and Kang and Liang resumed their futile efforts to reinstall the emperor on the throne. Again and again, the Protect the Emperor Society planned sending assassins to the court to kill Cixi, Rong Lu, and other grandees. But none of the plans were ever attempted. Lacking active supporters inside the country, the leaders of the Society applied themselves to setting up and expanding its chapters among overseas Chinese in Japan, Hawaii, North and South America, the Philippines, and South-East Asia.

The Society propagated reform and nothing but reform. The journal *Xinmin congbao* (Revival of the People) launched by Liang Qichao in early 1902 in place of the defunct *Qingyibao*, Liang's literary journal *Xin Xiaoshuo* (New Novel, launched in 1902), and Guangzhi (Promotion of Knowledge) publishing house founded in 1902, were the Society's ideological and organisational centres. And in 1904, the reformers finally started a newspaper, *Shibao* (The Epoch), in mainland China (Shanghai's International Settlement), of which, too, Liang Qichao was secretly the editor-in-chief.

Though nominally Kang Youwei was still the head of the Protect the Emperor Society, the true leader of the Reform Movement of that period was Liang Qichao. Unlike his tutor, who continued to spout the reform slogans and arguments dating to 1898 (as vividly illustrated by his *Letter in Criticism of the Revolution*, written in 1902), Liang tried to adapt his propaganda to the disaffection reigning inside the country and the mounting patriotic sentiment of the youth.

In 1901 in the *Qingyibao*, and from 1902 on in the newly started *Xinmin congbao*, Liang launched out on a 'new course', blending propaganda of reform with seemingly incompatible calls for 'great upheaval', even 'revolution'.

The oppressive system of several millennia must be destroyed, wrote Liang Qichao, for that was the only way to open the door to progress. But since he relegated the act of destroying the political system to the indefinite future—a future when there would be enough 'wise and circumspect' men, men who would 'destroy' only to con-

struct anew — he saw 'destruction' as a purely ideological and 'bloodless' act eradicating old ideas, notions, and habits through the introduction of new concepts and knowledge.

Liang wrote of revolution as China's sole road to salvation, but explained that while in Japanese the word meant a sudden forcible political overthrow, for China it meant reform. In Liang's vocabulary, revolution was nothing but a call for reform. He fell back on the social-Darwinist concept of 'natural competitive struggle among nations' to urge and propagate 'nationalism'. But unlike the 'nationalism' of the revolutionary wing, his slogan was not directed against the alien Manchu dynasty, and was a plea to make China strong through reform, enlightenment, education, and so on. The first step to this China, as he saw it, was to cultivate in Chinese hearts a sense of national identity and the qualities and virtues inherent in a 'civil society'.

Liang's 'new course', which he fashioned under the influence of the changing conditions, was, however, also a reflection of the doubts that had assailed him and certain other reformers as they became aware of the lack of promise, the futility, of re-installing Guangxu on the imperial throne, and, indeed, of the mounting opposition to the Qing up and down the country.

But the natural growth of the disaffection for the Manchus into a mood of revolution among the Chinese students in, say, Japan, cowed and frightened Liang Qichao and made him draw away from his earlier propaganda of 'destruction' and gradual 'political revolution'. In 1903, his propaganda grew less vehement, and instantly forfeited its former power of attraction. The youth turned its back on him. The Protect the Emperor Society and practically all its chapters came to a period of crisis, which Liang sought to overcome by hammering out a new action programme. But this came later—well after 1905.

The other group in the bourgeois-landlord opposition camp, representing the national bourgeoisie and landlords with commercial interests inside the country, sought a solution through agreement or deal with the ruling elite, and especially with the Chinese feudalist landlords. Its political platform reposed on two basic demands—introduction of a moderate constitution that would, while preserving the Qing monarchy, endow the Chinese merchant and industrial elements with a range of political rights, and local self-government. This second demand, though it looked moderate enough, had far-reaching implications for the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-oriented landlords who hoped that the bodies of local self-government would serve them as a stepping-stone to power on the national scale.

But in the period we are dealing with here, 1901-1904, the bourgeois-landlord opposition inside China had not yet established any

organisational or political centres able to marshal any impressive force. The more influential of its members, such as industrialist and landlord Zhang Jian, endeavoured to prevail on the Qing government to carry through constitutional reforms. They did so in messages, addresses, and petitions to top dignitaries, and in personal contacts with prominent personalities, such as Zhang Zhidong and Yuan Shikai.

In 1904, Zhang Jian approached Zhang Zhidong in writing, pleading the case of constitutional monarchy. He also asked to be introduced at the court. That year, too, on Zhang Jian's initiative, the text of the Japanese Constitution was translated into Chinese. The following year, he tried to have the translation forwarded to the empress dowager through Yuan Shikai. In a bid to win more followers, to give their movement legal status, to make it relatively more massive, its advocates, especially in China's central and southern provinces, started newspapers and journals to propagate their views, among them such influential organs as *Yangzijiang*, *Dongfang zazhi*, *Waijiaobao*, and *Shibao*.

Campaigning for constitutional monarchy and local self-government, for incentives to industry, commerce, and other enterprise, these 'constitutionalist' publications, as they were called at the turn of the century, regarded with the utmost disfavour the presence of foreign interests in China. (The very first issue of *Waijiaobao*, for example, which appeared in 1902, carried an article entitled, 'All Railways and Mines in China Have Fallen Into the Hands of Foreigners'.) They wrote of the dangers of popular unrest and the mounting revolutionary mood of the people. The solution they offered was reforms modelled on those of Japan. (This was the subject of many articles, among them one entitled, 'If the Court Wants to Save the Country, It Must Draw up a Plan of Radical Change', which appeared in the journal *Dongfang zazhi*, No. 4, 1904.)

In 1901-1904, the bourgeois-landlord opposition contributed substantially to the political consolidation of the country's new social forces. It spread the idea of constitutional monarchy and laid the ideological and organisational groundwork for a fresh surge of the constitutional-monarchist movement in 1905 stimulated by tsarist Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, the outbreak of the first Russian revolution in 1905, and the constitutional manoeuvres of the Qing.

Consolidation of the Revolutionary Movement

The ignominious surrender of the Manchus to the imperialist powers in 1900-1901, the general mood of disaffection, and the

disintegration of the reform camp, gave added momentum to the revolutionary movement. Large groups of the patriotic bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and anti-Manchu scholarship and landlords took up the cudgels against the Qing dynasty.

The consolidation of the revolutionary movement (in 1901-1904) followed a dual path: while the 'old' organisation, Sun Yatsen's Revive China Society, expanded, gained fresh strength, and underwent renewal, new revolutionary organisations and centres of the bourgeois-revolutionary movement sprang up all over China.

Alongside the revolutionary centre in Hong Kong, the headquarters of the Revive China Society, two more centres emerged—one in Hunan and Hubei with two revolutionary organisations, Huaxinghui (Chinese Rejuvenation League) and Kexue buxiusuo (School of Supplementary Knowledge), and the other in Shanghai, the coastal centre in the east with one organisation, Guangfuhui (League for the Promotion of Sovereignty).

New revolutionary groups and organisations sprang up among Chinese immigrants and students in Japan, where they were accorded relative freedom of political activity owing to the Japanese rulers' intentions of exploiting the Chinese revolutionary forces for their own purpose. An important contributing factor was the influence of such revolutionary leaders as Sun Yatsen and Zhang Taiyan, and others who had emigrated to Japan after 1900. The organisations took in the many landlord, bourgeois, and petty-bourgeois literati groups with a more or less radical nucleus clustering round the various revolutionary journals and newspapers.

In the spring of 1901, a group of survivors of the Independence Army's abortive rising who had fled to Japan (Qin Lishan, Ji Yuan-cheng, Shen Xiangyun, etc.) started an anti-Manchu journal named *Guominbao* (Nation) in Tokyo. It published Zhang Taiyan's article, 'Explanation of the Words "Vengeance on the Manchus"', which called for the overthrow of the Qing, and was the first revolutionary organ to come out against the Protect the Emperor Society. The journal came to grips with the slogan of a constitutional monarchy under Zai Tian, and flayed the reformers' attempts at heading off the assault on the Qing monarchy.

Another political league had sprung up in Japan at about the same time—Guangdong zilihui (Guangdong Independence Association)—formed by natives of Guangdong province in response to rumours that the Qing government was about to cede Guangdong to France. Students and emigrants, natives of the province, held meetings in Tokyo and Yokohama to protest against concessions to foreign powers. But when the rumour proved unfounded the society dissolved.

Further attempts to set up anti-Manchu organisations in Japan date to 1902. By that time the community of Chinese students had

grown considerably. To stimulate anti-Manchu sentiment among them, Zhang Taiyan and *Guominbao* editor Qin Lishan planned to hold memorial meetings to mourn the anniversary of the death of the last Ming emperor. They were to be held in March and April in Tokyo and Yokohama, but the Japanese police ordered them cancelled. The preparations for them, however, and the proclamation written by Zhang Taiyan, made a strong impression and furthered the spread of anti-Manchu feeling.

In the autumn and winter of 1902, Chinese students in Japan organised in provincial associations, spurred by patriotic sentiment, began planning a single anti-Manchu political organisation. They saw its prototype in Mazzini's Young Italy, and wanted to name their group Young China. Then they had second thoughts: the name would attract the attention of the Qing authorities, and they chose another name, Youth League (Qingnianhui). The organisation was politically diffuse. It included radical groups, and extreme moderates. Its programme called for 'nationalism' and 'destructionism', which were terms borrowed from the writings of Liang Qichao, though, as time would show, they were conceived differently by different members of the League.

In the winter of 1902, the radicals in the various provincial associations began publishing their own journals. The students from Hunan launched a journal in December 1902 (*Youxue yibian*—Itinerant Scholars' Journal of Translations), containing translated works on the history of the French Revolution, West European history and philosophy, and excerpts from the Japanese press. Not to be outdone, the Hubei natives association started the *Hubei xueshengjie* (World of Hubei Students), students from Jiangsu the journal *Jiangsu*, those from Zhejiang the monthly *Zhejiang chao* (Tides from Zhejiang), and those from Zhili the *Zhimo* (Zhili Word). Their early issues contained no direct calls for the overthrow of the Manchus, and were in many ways cut to conform with the writings of Liang Qichao. But in a matter of months, with the situation at home and abroad laden with conflict, most of them took up revolutionary ideas and began propagating the overthrow of the Qing dynasty.

Under the impact of the revolutionaries' anti-Manchu propaganda, Liang Qichao's principle of 'nationalism', meaning inevitable struggle among nations and races, began to be interpreted chiefly as struggle against the alien Manchu dynasty, and Liang's 'destructionism' as a call for immediate political action.

The students' mood changed radically in the spring and summer of 1903, when the Qing government ordered the arrest of those of them who had issued the patriotic call to resist the aggressive acts of France in South China and of tsarist Russia in Manchuria. In April 1903, in fact, various Chinese provincial associations in Japan affiliated with

the Youth League began campaigning for armed resistance to the aggressors. At a mass meeting attended by some 500 students, volunteers were enlisted for a student army—the Resist France Military Corps and the Resist Russia Military Corps. A student attending a Japanese military academy, Lan Tianwei, was put in command. The two corps adopted a set of regulations, saying that they 1) expressed the anger of the whole nation, and 2) considered it their duty to offer armed resistance to the aggressors and wished to operate under the general direction of the government. Delegates were chosen to go to the mainland—to visit various cities, and to call at the court in Beijing. An appeal was telegraphed to Yuan Shikai, asking him to resist the enemy. Telegrams were also despatched to various Chinese cities, requesting support.

To this patriotic student action, the Qing court responded with a secret order to provincial officials to 'arrest and try' any of the 'mutineers' returning to China, 'who on the pretext of repulsing outside enemies are plotting revolution, as Tang Caichang had done in his time under cover of the "protect the emperor" slogan while seeking to depose the dynasty'. The order came to the knowledge of patriotic elements in China and the Chinese students in Japan. It had the impact of a bursting bombshell: the anti-national posture of the Manchu court was clear evidence, at least to radical students, that the country's salvation was unthinkable without overthrowing the Qing. This was said in so many words in an article in the journal *Jiangsu*, entitled 'Can Revolution Be Avoided?'.

Under the effects of these developments the Youth League began to break up. Its radical wing formed a secret revolutionary organisation in May-June 1903. Its legal name was Militant People's Educational Association. The first revolutionary organisation of Chinese students in Japan to envisage the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, it did not, however, take any independent political action. Its members were divided into different provincial associations; they continued publishing their own journals, which were now of a distinctly revolutionary complexion. Soon, the Association ceased to operate as a single whole. It split into several revolutionary groups—the nuclei of new revolutionary organisations that tried to act in China proper and to constitute new centres of the revolutionary movement.

One such revolutionary group was formed in the summer and autumn of 1903 by Hunan students in Japan, Huang Xing, Chen Tianhua, Yang Shouren, and others. These young men were associated with the Hunan youth journal *Youxue yibian*, had enlisted in the Student Army, and were members of the Militant People's Educational Association. Their secret Tokyo-based anti-Manchu organisation, with Huang Xing elected as its head, was called Chinese Rejuvenation League. In the winter of 1903-1904, its leaders and a group of

members, all students from Hunan, returned to their native province, where the new organisation was constituted on home soil in the provincial capital of Changsha in the spring of 1904. Huang Xing was put in charge of organisational and military matters, and Yang Shouren (Yang Yulin) and Chen Tianhua handled propaganda. The anti-Qing pamphlets by Chen Tianhua (*Look Around You*, and *Alarm Bell*), written in the vernacular, with passages in verse (for reading aloud) highly popular among the illiterate mass of the people, reached a wide audience. Verse indeed became the chief propaganda medium used by most anti-Manchu revolutionary organisations in the period before the Xinhai revolution.

The leaders of the Chinese Rejuvenation League planned an armed uprising in Changsha in October 1904 (on the birthday of Empress Dowager Cixi), envisaging capture of government offices and the arsenal, recruitment of soldiers for a revolutionary army, and a march on the neighbouring provinces where, they hoped, anti-Manchu actions would have started by then in response to their own. It was planned to use the secret societies as the strike force, and in pursuance of this aim Huang Xing made contacts with one of their leaders, Ma Fuyi. A special body, the Joint Union of Avengers (Tongchouhui), was formed to direct the secret societies' forces. But the organisation's ties and connections were limited. It had no arms and no money. To raise funds, a group of members conspired to seize the gold ornaments adorning a temple in the environs of the city.

The active nucleus of the Chinese Rejuvenation League, numbering less than a score, consisted chiefly of young intellectuals who came from landlord, *shenshi*, bureaucratic, merchant, and prosperous peasant families. They considered themselves part of the 'third estate' (a term borrowed from works on the French Revolution). Owing to the peculiarities of the revolutionary movement at that stage, to its anti-Manchu and anti-imperialist thrust, the 'third estate' in China included a large landlord element.

The League's programme reposed on two basic demands: overthrow of the Qing dynasty, and establishment of a republic. The Hunanites' journal in Tokyo, *Youxue yibian*, and the writings of the League's leaders dating to 1903 and 1904 show, too, that the idea of overthrowing the Qing had a built-in anti-imperialist orientation. They contained the demand for a protectionist policy in commerce and industry, and, for that matter, Chen Tianhua's pamphlets also called for a revision of the unequal treaties and for securing China's independence. Chen was fired by the idea of armed struggle against foreign aggressors. 'Scholars, put away your brushes!' he appealed. 'Tillers, leave your ploughs! Shopkeepers, put up the shutters! Craftsmen, lay aside your tools! Hone your knives and swords ... and let us together drink the cup of bloody wine! Smite the foreign

devils! Smite the traitors who have sold the nation to foreigners!'

Huang Xing and his mates in Hunan hoped to use the favourable situation created by the popular uprising in Guangxi, and give support to the Guangxi rebels with their rising in Changsha. Members of the League managed to make contact with secret societies in Guangxi through Ma Fuyi.

At about the same time, a new revolutionary organisation was formed in Wuchang in the neighbouring province of Hubei. A group of patriotic youth headed by Wu Luzhen (who later gained prominence as a military leader, and was killed in 1912 on the order of Yuan Shikai) and Zhang Nanxian, had taken shape back in 1902. It intended to use the army to fight the Manchus. That was the reason why Wu Luzhen had gone to Japan in 1902 to enlist in an officers' school, while Zhang Nanxian, Zou Yongcheng, and a few others joined newly formed Hubei provincial army units as officers in 1903-1904. In April 1904, they decided to set up a revolutionary organisation of junior officers and soldiers of the Wuchang garrison. The School of Supplementary Knowledge was conceived as a legal screen. On the pretext of rounding out the education of men and officers, the School's leaders Lu Dasen, Zhang Nanxian, Cao Yabo, and Zou Yongcheng engaged in revolutionary propaganda. The programme consisted of two objectives—expel the Manchus, and set up a republic. Extensive use was made of the anti-Manchu pamphlets of Chen Tianhua, Zhang Taiyan, and Zou Rong as propaganda media.

Revolutionaries in Hunan soon learned about the new organisation, and Huang Xing went to Wuchang in June to establish contacts. Agreement was reached on joint action: the Hubei group was to support the Changsha rising by getting at least part of the Wuchang troops to revolt.

But the communications between the Hubei and Hunan organisations were undependable. The School's propaganda had only begun, and its influence on the troops in the province was still weak.

The Chinese Rejuvenation League's plan was simple: on the Empress Dowager's birthday, when the governor and the top officialdom of the province would gather in a temple in the heart of Changsha, *huidang* detachments would converge on them from four sides. Ten days before the date of the rising, however, the plan came to the knowledge of the authorities. So did the names of its organisers, and the aims of the League. One version has it that there was a police spy in the organisation. According to another, the police had arrested two secret society members in a tea-house as the two were loudly discussing the outlook of the rising. The League's headquarters were raided. The authorities issued warrants for the arrest of League members. Huang Xing, Chen Tianhua, Song Jiaoren, and a

number of other League leaders escaped to Shanghai, then on to Japan. Here, in 1905, they launched a revolutionary newspaper, *Twentieth Century China* (*Ershi shiji zhi Zhina*).

At the end of 1904, Huang Xing suggested renewing revolutionary activity in Hunan to back up Lu Yafa's rebellion in Guangxi. Two members of the League, Zou Yongcheng and Wu Ren, were dispatched to make contact with Lu, but by the time they reached Guangxi the main rebel forces had been crushed.

After the crackdown on the Hunan organisation, the local authorities informed the governor of Hubei that a similar plot was brewing in his province. But leaders of the *Kexue buxiusuo*, informed of the failure of the Changsha revolutionaries by Huang Xing, who in his flight to Shanghai had stopped over in Wuchang where he was given assistance by Cao Yabo, suspended their activity for a time to evade reprisals.

In Shanghai, revolutionaries were relatively free to act within the limits of the International Settlement. At the end of 1901, a group of editors of the Tokyo-based journal *Guominbao* (Qin Lishan, Yang Tingdong, and others) came to Shanghai and launched a new journal, *Dalu* (Mainland). It functioned in the open, calling for the overthrow of the Qing, and attacking the posture of the Protect the Emperor Society.

In the spring of 1902, Zhang Taiyan came to Shanghai from Japan. In April, following government decrees on setting up new schools and publishing houses, when Zhang found supporters among the patriotic intelligentsia seeking to extend and improve the educational system in the country, he organised the Chinese Educational Association (*Zhongguo Jiaoyuhui*).

Cai Yuanpei, a prominent scholar and pedagogue, was elected head of the Association. The aims and membership were at first more than moderate—translation of foreign books and compilation of textbooks, improvement and modernisation of teaching methods, and publication of literature in various fields of knowledge. People of moderate political views made up a large proportion of the membership. Later, some of them withdrew completely from political action, while the rest joined the bourgeois-landlord opposition. Towards the end of the year the radical nucleus succeeded in making the Association a major centre of anti-government propaganda.

In early 1903, the Educational Association, using its own resources, founded a boys and a girls secondary schools. The boys school, named Patriotic School (*Aiguoxueshe*), had an enrolment of some 130 students who had been expelled from schools in Jiangsu province for demanding the introduction of political subjects and freedom of discussion. Among the teachers of the school were Zhang Taiyan and Cai Yuanpei, the former's lectures and propaganda of

'nationalism'—a call to overthrow the alien Manchus—exercising an especially profound influence on the students. In addition, members of the Educational Association organised meetings in the International Settlement, issuing revolutionary slogans.

A group of revolutionary youth studying at the school came forward, seeking membership in the Educational Association. A ring of promising literati, priming for revolution, formed around Zhang Taiyan. It included Zhang Shizhao, and Huang Zhongyang. This was the time, when Zou Rong, author of the highly popular republican pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Army*, came to Shanghai from Japan.

Under the impact of revolutionary propaganda, the student body of the Patriotic School enrolled in the Shanghai corps of the Student Army in May 1903. A month earlier, the radical nucleus of the Educational Association had decided to put out a revolutionary newspaper. Zhang Taiyan, Huang Zhongyang, and Cai Yuanpei approached the owner of the moderate Chinese paper, *Subao*, and talked him into letting them run it. From April 1903 on, the paper's complexion changed radically. A monitor of Shanghai's revolutionaries, its chief message was to drive out the Manchus. Among other things, it published Zhang Taiyan's letter, 'Criticism of Kang Youwei's Views on Revolution', his laudatory review of Zou Rong's *The Revolutionary Army*, and Cai Yuanpei's article, 'Explication of the Hatred for the Manchus'. All these pieces, a model of revolutionary writing, exposed the Manchu regime for what it was, and called for a 'bloody revolution' to throw down the Qing dynasty.

The influence of the *Subao* spread far beyond Shanghai. Its message reached the Chinese students in Japan, and the Chinese communities in Hong Kong and South-East Asia. The Manchu authorities, disturbed by the far-reaching results achieved by the Shanghai-based revolutionaries and by their rising influence at home and abroad, requested the foreign authorities of the International Settlement to close *Subao* and arrest its editorial staff. The chief of the Chinese police in Shanghai offered a bribe to the U.S. consul, whereupon the Settlement police was instructed to ban the paper and imprison its editors. But most of the Educational Association leaders and *Subao* editors, who had been forewarned, escaped. Cai Yuanpei, too, fled to Qingdao (Tsingtao). Zhang Taiyan, however, deaf to the pleas of his friends, decided to stay in the offices of the *Subao* and await arrest. And the day after he had been taken into detention, Zou Rong walked into a police station in the International Settlement and gave himself up.

At the price of considerable material concessions, the Qing court made stubborn efforts to secure the extradition of the two revolutionaries. But that, in the opinion of the International Settlement's

authorities, was liable to create an undesirable precedent. Instead, the Shanghai Municipal Council decided to put the case before the Mixed Court. The Qing regime was represented by a lawyer. For the first time, it opposed revolutionaries not as a sovereign power, but as one of the litigating parties. The case, known as the Shanghai Sedition Trial, was based on the allegedly seditious statements contained in the review of Zou Rong's pamphlet and a passage from Zhang Taiyan's open letter of rebuttal to Kang Youwei where he referred insultingly to the emperor's mental capacity.

The trial, unprecedented in the history of the Qing Empire, was covered by the Chinese press and, in effect, acted as a medium for the propagation of revolutionary ideas. Zhang Taiyan was sentenced to three and Zou Rong to two years' imprisonment in the gaol of the Shanghai International Settlement. Young Zou, only nineteen and weak of health when he was gaoled, failed to endure the severe prison conditions and died a few months before his sentence ran out.

For a while, the *Subao* sedition trial put a stop to revolutionary activity in Shanghai. In the meantime, a group of revolutionary students, natives of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, had returned from Japan in the autumn of 1903, and settled in Shanghai. They were associated with the journals *Zhejiang chao* (Tides from Zhejiang) and *Jiangsu*, and had a chosen leader, Gong Baoquan. They had all originally been members of the Militant People's Educational Association in Japan, and had in the summer of 1903 decided to transfer their action to China, where they intended to make what they called individual terror the chief means of struggle against the Qing.

At this time, Tao Chengzhang, a native of Zhejiang, attempted to establish a revolutionary organisation in the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. In 1902, he had gone to Beijing to see if there was any chance of getting the troops there and students of Beijing University to perform an anti-Manchu coup. The same purpose prompted him to enlist in some military academy in China or Japan. He failed in his bid, and returned to his native province, his mind made up to marshal the secret societies in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Anhui against the Qing throne. In 1903, he and his close friends Wei Lan and Ao Jiaxiang formed a relationship with the chiefs of the local secret societies, and the following year, upon meeting Tao Chengzhang, Gong Baoquan, and Cai Yuanpei (who had by then returned from Qingdao, to Shanghai), decided to found a new organisation to absorb the surviving radical nucleus of the Chinese Educational Association, the group of Gong Baoquan, and the group of Tao Chengzhang. The new revolutionary body, named League for the Promotion of Sovereignty (Guangfuhui), was to be headed by Cai Yuanpei. Zhang Taiyan, who was still in gaol, was also regarded as one of its founding members, for news of the activity of revolutionaries in Shanghai had reached

his prison cell, and he gave his enthusiastic approval to the idea of forming the Sovereignty League.

No sooner the League was established than two groups, or more precisely two divisions, emerged in it. One devoted itself exclusively to propaganda, while the other, operating more or less on its own, concentrated on revolutionary action. In place of the defunct *Subao*, a new revolutionary daily appeared in Shanghai in the autumn of 1903, named *Guominri ribao* (The Day of the Nation), among whose editors were the eminent journalist Liu Guanhan and the poet Chen Qubing. Revolutionaries called the paper the second *Subao*. Sun Yizhong, a member of the Sovereignty League and previously an editor of the *Zhejiang chao*, started the *Hangzhou baihuabao* (Hangzhou Vernacular Newspaper) in 1903. At about the same time, the newspapers *Jingtong ribao* (The Bell) and *Zhongguo baihuabao* (Chinese Vernacular Newspaper) were launched in Shanghai, the latter, founded in December 1903, lasting until October 1904.

The other group of Sovereignty League members, led by Tao Chengzhang, Ao Jiaxiong, and Xu Xilin, was immersed in revolutionary action. The organisational and political matters were chiefly in Tao's hands. He joined the Longhuahui secret society in Zhejiang, wrote its new regulations, organised secret meeting places in Zhejiang and Jiangsu, and purchased and distributed arms. The spadework for a rising in Anhui province was done independently by Xu Xilin, and that for a rising in Zhejiang by Ao Jiaxiong.

The leadership of the Sovereignty League consisted chiefly of people from bureaucratic and landlord families, and *shenshi* literati. The League's sole official goal, as its name implied, was reflected in the slogan: 'Restoration of the sovereign power of the Chinese, and expulsion of the Manchu Qing dynasty'. These objectives suited all the groups united in the League, though each had its own political platform. One group, representing the interests of anti-Manchu landed proprietors (Xu Xilin being its most articulate member), was wholly satisfied to just expel the Manchus. It laid no claim to any republican restructuring of China or to any social-economic reforms. Another, the largest in number, led by Cai Yuanpei and Zhang Taiyan, assumed that the Manchu dynasty would give place to a Chinese republic. And the third, a small group under Tao Chengzhang and Liu Guanghan, held that the call for the overthrow of the Qing and the constitution of a republic should be compounded with a plan for social-economic reconstruction. This section of League leaders endeavoured to blend various elements of the petty-bourgeois socialist doctrine with the traditional Chinese teachings. In the new regulations that Tao Chengzhang had drawn up for the Dragon Flower secret society in 1904, he worked in the following demand: 'Merge all fields and lands, make them common property ... so there should

be neither rich nor poor.'

Other leaders of the Sovereignty League, too, and notably Zhang Taiyan, envisaged an egalitarian redistribution of land. But none of them treated the idea as a plank in their platform, and exerted no specific influence on this score on the membership. The main thrust in the League's propaganda was on 'expelling the Manchus'. The anti-Manchu articles and pamphlets of Liu Guanghan, and especially those of Zhang Taiyan, were tremendously popular. The anti-Manchu writings of Zhang and other Chinese bourgeois-landlord revolutionaries were a blend of progressive demands, those of ending alien oppression, discrimination of Chinese, and the archaic monarchy, with the reactionary chauvinist notion of Chinese superiority to non-Chinese inside the country and to all other nations in the world. 'Nationalism,' wrote Zhang Taiyan, 'was implanted in remote antiquity, in the times of primordial man, and the closer we approach our time, the more distinct its main features become. Nationalism—is an innate quality, and is seated in the nature of all peoples inhabiting the Earth.'² Zhang's views were picked up by most revolutionary propagandists, and resonated in other revolutionary publications.

In 1904 and 1905, the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty had not yet mounted any armed actions. The propaganda of its members, however, and its ties with secret societies had a strong bearing on the subsequent eruption of revolutionary struggles in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui provinces.

The growth of the revolutionary forces was naturally reflected in the state of Sun Yatsen's Revive China Society, the first bourgeois revolutionary organisation in China. At the end of 1902, taking advantage of the favourable situation in South China, Xie Zuantai (whose mate, Yang Quyun, was killed in early 1901), tried to start an uprising in Guangzhou at his own risk, without informing Sun Yatsen of his intentions. He established fictitious commercial firms in Guangzhou and Hong Kong in order to have dependable communications with the secret societies, which were cast in the role of the strike force. Officially, the rising was headed by Hong Quanfu, who was believed to be a descendant of the Taiping chief Hong Xiuquan. The immediate preparations for the insurrection were conducted by Xie Zuantai, Liang Muguang (who had close ties with the secret societies), and the merchant Li Jitang (who financed the action).

In their proclamations, the leaders declared the aim of the insurrection to be 'the overthrow of the Manchu government, which oppresses Chinese' and 'the establishment, as in Europe, of a political system based on joint governance by the ruler and the people'. They held that some time after the 'pacification of the Under Heaven', the country would elect a president, vested with the functions of a constitutional monarch. (The man they had in mind for the presidency

was reformer Rong Hong, who had been elected chairman of the short-lived Zhangyuan parliament convened in Shanghai in 1900. Typically, Hong Quanfu dated his orders, 'the first year of the Great Ming state'.)

The rising was timed to start on 29 January 1903, the day of the Lunar New Year. The rebels planned to assassinate the city's top functionaries, capture the arsenal and the viceroy's yamen, and proclaim the overthrow of the Qing. But shortly before the Lunar New Year, the commercial firm (located in the French concession in Guangzhou) that was to have supplied the arms, decided to pocket the advance payment and betray the conspirators to the authorities. The police raided the premises of Xie Zuantai's fictitious firms, and the leaders of the planned rising barely escaped the police net, seeking safety in flight. Following this dismal failure, the section of Revive China members associated with Xie withdrew from revolutionary activity.

Meanwhile, smarting from the defeat of his 1900 rising, Sun Yatsen had again emigrated to Japan, where throughout 1901-1903 he resided in Yokohama, making only rare trips to Tokyo. He maintained sporadic ties with a number of Chinese student journals and societies, rendered financial assistance to the *Guominbao*, encouraged the activity of the Guangdong Independence Society, and communicated with members of the Chinese revolutionary student movement. Until 1903, he had neither his own in the least influential propaganda organ nor any organisational and political centre that would have enabled him to ride the wave of the mounting anti-government feeling in China. Though Sun's close friend, Chen Shaobo, was still putting out the *Zhongguo ribao* in Hong Kong, it was almost entirely eclipsed in influence by the *Qingyibao* and *Xinmin congbao* put out by reformer Liang Qichao. Sun Yatsen's ties with Revive China chapters overseas had also slackened. Back in 1900, Liang Qichao had managed to put the Chinese in Hawaii under his influence, and to isolate them from Sun Yatsen. In Yokohama, too, and in South-East Asia, a section of the Revive China membership came under the spell of Liang's personality and the influence of the Protect the Emperor Society.

But at the close of 1902, and especially in early 1903, with the Chinese revolutionary press in Japan stirring up revolutionary sentiment and new revolutionary groups and organisations appearing on the scene, Sun Yatsen was able to enliven the activity of his Revive China Society, to regenerate and expand its base and branches.

In late 1902, he made a voyage to Hanoi, in northern Vietnam, with the aim of seeing Paul Doumer, the French governor-general of Annam, and soliciting French support for anti-Manchu activity in South China. During his stay there, he prevailed on a group of

Chinese immigrants to set up a branch of the Revive China Society. Paul Doumer, however, was away in France, and Sun met his secretary instead. But in the absence of the governor no concrete negotiations with the French colonial administration could be held. At the same time, Sun worked through his Japanese friends to restore contacts with the Japanese government. There was no response, however, because a Russo-Japanese conflict was in the offing, and the authorities wanted to avoid any complications with the Qing. In 1903, Sun succeeded in restarting some of the Revive China branches in Japan, and to establish ties with members of various Chinese revolutionary groups and journals. In the autumn, the journal *Jiangsu* published his article on China's international relations.

In the summer and autumn of 1903, at the request of the Manchu court, the Japanese authorities restricted admission of Chinese students to Japanese military academies. Sun Yatsen sought ways to get around the restrictions, making the most of his ties with prominent Japanese politicians. In the autumn, using Revive China Society funds, he instituted a military school in Tokyo for revolutionary Chinese students, where trainees were instructed in the use of the latest weapons and the science of war. Sun Yatsen, too, studied military matters. The school was in existence for something like half a year.

The restoration of the Revive China Society in Japan, and the founding of the revolutionary military school, was evidence that Sun's organisation was regaining its militancy. But owing to the absence of effective support in China proper, its resources in manpower and funds were clearly too deficient for a successful build-up of revolutionary action. At the end of 1903, Sun Yatsen set out on a tour of Hawaii and the United States to pry the mass of Chinese emigrants away from the ideological and political grip of the Protect the Emperor Society, and to restart Revive China branches there. Sun countered the reformers' programme with his own refurbished programme of bourgeois revolutionary reconstruction. In 1903, as he wrote later, a new system of views had shaped in his mind, which was soon to gain circulation as the Three Principles of the People.

Two of the Principles he had made public before: overthrow of the Manchus, and establishment of a democratic government. They had, indeed, been the central points in the oath of the Revive China Society. Now, however, the slogan of establishing a republic was worded in more conclusive terms, and was augmented by a call for social and economic reconstruction and the 'equalisation of land rights' principle. But Sun was not yet ready to elaborate on the meaning of his land principle and in later years its meaning changed several times. First mention of it by Sun dates to 1899. In 1902, during his talk with Zhang Taiyan in Japan, he explained it thus:

'The future rulers ought to establish the following system. He who does not till the land himself may not own fields under grain, vegetable plots, or ponds. People ought to get only so much land as will sustain them.'³ (Sun Yatsen held that parcels of land should be limited to 10-12 *mu*.) By 1903, Sun had worked the equalisation of land rights demand into the oath taken by new members of the Revive China Society. This new, 'expanded', oath was taken by the trainees of the revolutionary military school in Tokyo in the autumn of 1903.

In Hong Kong, too, the Revive China chapter became more active. Two new revolutionary papers were launched, both of them ideologically and organisationally connected with the first Revive China daily, *Zhongguo ribao*. At the end of 1903, Zheng Guanyi, a well-known journalist, started as editor-in-chief of the *Shijie gongyibao* (The Common Weal) whose propaganda message was much the same as that of the *Zhongguo ribao*, and which people in Hong Kong regarded as the city's second revolutionary paper. Six months later (in 1904), Zheng Guanyi and a number of *Zhongguo ribao* journalists set up a new paper, *Guangdong ribao*, Hong Kong's third revolutionary paper.

In early 1904, Sun Yatsen set out from Japan for Hawaii. The local Protect the Emperor press started a malicious slander campaign against him when he arrived. Sun mounted a hard-fought counter-offensive for the minds of the local Chinese community, using the newspaper *Longjibao* as the monitor of his ideas. He conferred with various Chinese groups, and spoke at a succession of mass meetings. A part of the radical Chinese emigrants had been inveigled to join the reform party by deception: Liang Qichao had assured them that 'protect the emperor' was no more than a convenient slogan, and that they would in fact be working for revolution. Sun Yatsen tore the cloak off this lie in an Open Letter to Fellow Countrymen. The reformers had also distracted the Chinese in Hawaii from revolutionary activity by claiming that 'revolution would cause China's partition and final collapse'. This notion Sun attacked in an article entitled, 'Rebuttal to the Protect the Emperor Newspaper', which, like his Open Letter, appeared in *Longjibao*. Here he argued that revolution against the Manchus and nothing but revolution could save China from collapse and enslavement.

To have closer ties with the Chinese in Hawaii and the United States, Sun Yatsen joined the secret organisation embracing the bulk of the Chinese community, the Zhigongtang (Loyalty and Justice Clan). On foreign soil, it had lost its original character and anti-government thrust, and had degenerated into a mutual aid society and a means of sustaining the Chinese identity. Sun, who was accorded a fairly high rank in its hierarchy, made good use of his ties with it

in Hawaii and later in the U.S.A. Sun's battle against reformers finally triumphed. The Chinese in Hawaii, he wrote to a friend in Japan, were leaving the Protect the Emperor Society in batches, and joining the Revive China Society.

At the end of 1904, having regenerated the chapters in Hawaii, Sun went on to the United States, where no Revive China organisations yet existed. The Protect the Emperor people tried to have him detained, with their U.S.-based papers launching a vicious campaign against revolutionaries.

To fight the reformers, Sun Yatsen used the *Datong ribao* appearing in San Francisco, and addressed numerous Chinese audiences in that city and other Chinese communities residing in the U.S.A. Here, too, he got in touch with leaders of the Loyalty and Justice Clan, whom he won over for revolutionary activity. He wrote new rules for the Clan, in which for the first time he set forth in writing the Three Principles of the People. Though no official Revive China chapters were set up in the United States, Sun obtained the support and, what mattered most, the financial aid of the Chinese communities. At his request, the *Datong ribao* print shop put out 11,000 copies of Zou Rong's *Revolutionary Army*. Local Chinese bought it at an extra-high price with the surcharge going to the revolutionary coffers. (After the revolution would have won, owners of a copy of the pamphlet were promised a sum ten times higher from the new government than they had paid.)

In early 1905, Sun Yatsen left the U.S.A. for Europe with the intention of organising revolutionary Chinese students there. Besides, he hoped to determine the attitude of various European governments to a revolution in China.

The emergence of new revolutionary centres in China and the regeneration of the Revive China Society set the ideological and political stage for an all-China organisation of revolutionaries: the propaganda of revolution had grown in scale, the planks of the revolutionary programme appeared to have taken final shape, and groups of professional revolutionaries were hard at work in the established centres of revolution. And Sun Yatsen's activity in Europe laid the foundation for a new united revolutionary organisation.

Chapter 13

THE ERA OF ASIA'S AWAKENING: THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN CHINA GROWS 1905-1908

With national capitalism taking stronger root and the sense of national identity spreading in China, the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 and the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907 had far-reaching repercussions. A new surge of revolutionary activity engulfed the country.

News of the revolution that had broken out in Russia, shaking the pillars of the autocratic tsarist regime, of the daring actions of Russian revolutionaries, and of the convocation of the Duma (parliament), and so on, impressed itself on the mood of China's bourgeois revolutionaries despite its meagreness and the one-sided, mostly distorted, interpretations of events given by different political camps.

Though in the contemporary situation Chinese revolutionaries were unable to fully comprehend the nature and implications of the developments and to obtain any clear idea of the contending political forces, the Russian revolution was an inspiring example, serving notice that determined revolutionary action against royalty was on the order of the day. In Chinese eyes, the various political forces in Russia consisted of the party of nihilists, the party of revolutionaries, and the social party. The revolution itself was equated to the French Revolution and, in general, to an attempt at overthrowing autocracy.

The ideologues of the bourgeois-landlord opposition used the news of the revolution and the Russian tsar's concessions to exert pressure on the Qing court and to goad it into carrying out constitutional reforms. The more realistic elements close to the Dragon Throne did, indeed, receive the events in Russia as an awesome warning to themselves, and gravitated more and more in favour of change as a course to safety.

The outcome of the Russo-Japanese war had incalculable repercussions, too. Fought on Manchurian soil, the war had, on the one hand, demonstrated the Qing monarchy's inability to safeguard the country's sovereignty, with foreign powers thrusting deeper and deeper

into China, and large groups of Chinese landlords rushing into the anti-government camp. On the other hand, the victory of an Asian country, Japan, which had only recently taken the course of bourgeois reform, over tsarist Russia, the powerful land that Chinese had traditionally viewed as unconquerable, loosened a surge of nationalist sentiment. All schools of thought opposing the Qing regime had a field day, propagating Japan's victory and portraying it as a triumph for the reform policy and the result of the advantages of constitutional monarchy.

Already in 1905-1908, the bourgeoisie in China betrayed clear signs that it was on the road to developing into what Marx termed 'a class for itself'. There was distinct differentiation on the social-economic and political planes. The peculiarities of its genesis were coming to the surface. The variety of strata this had made for displayed varying attitudes before—in preparation for—and during the 1911 revolution.

The founders of the biggest Chinese companies, notably in the coal-mining and cotton textile industries, were landlords and highly placed officials who came from the ruling class of feudalists. Some firms and enterprises had been founded by members of the merchant class, the compradores and money-lenders. While contending with the restrictive feudal tradition and the predominance of foreign capital, these sections of the Chinese bourgeoisie were also closely associated with the feudalist camp, and with foreign interests. They were eager to hem in the feudalists and foreigners, but were farthest from the thought of assaulting the pillars of their rule and power.

Another group of the Chinese bourgeoisie—proprietors of small and medium-size enterprises—came from the midst of tradesmen, owners of workshops and manufactories, and people who had returned from abroad. This was the group that represented the so-called national bourgeoisie. It was worst hit by the feudal restrictions, the corrupt officialdom, shortages of capital, and the pressure of foreign firms, and was ranged alongside the more numerous group of medium and small merchants, and the less numerous group of chiefly small capitalists active in the crafts. This latter group of workshop owners, though constituting a section of the nascent bourgeoisie, was for a number of reasons hesitant and unsure in its stand against the feudal order. Though they had to contend with a shortage of capital, pressure of foreign firms, and the extortionate practices of corrupt officials, these petty proprietors themselves reaped benefits from the feudal order in the countryside—the vast supply of cheap labour, and the misery of landless or land-poor peasants and artisans who had no protection whatever from the procurer and the proprietor of manufactories or workshops.

The relatively numerous and economically strong communities

of Chinese emigrants in Hong Kong, Macao, the South-East Asian countries, Japan, Hawaii, the U.S.A., Mexico, and South America were a specific and politically active force close to the national bourgeoisie at home, for they maintained close ties with various elements of the opposition in China, and notably in the maritime provinces of South and East China.

Also active, chiefly in the big cities and the river and sea ports, were the relatively large groups of the urban petty bourgeoisie—traders, artisans, students, intellectuals, and urban commoners.

The anti-American boycott of 1905, precipitated by the U.S. government's discrimination against Chinese immigrants, was an indication that the burgeoning Chinese bourgeoisie was getting on its feet. As a result of the 1894 treaty that the United States had imposed on China, the Chinese communities in America, Hawaii, and the Philippines received adverse and humiliating treatment, for the notorious exclusion laws banned entry to workers, to returning Chinese who had temporarily left the U.S.A., and required registration of Chinese residing in the United States. Chinese quarters in American cities were often attacked by mobs, and often gutted. The U.S. immigration authorities extended the application of the exclusion laws to all Chinese, regardless of their occupation and status. In December 1904, the term of the 1894 treaty expired, and the United States sought its renewal. At home and abroad, meanwhile, Chinese commercial and industrial groups called for its revision. In May 1905, the chamber of commerce in Shanghai appealed to the populace to boycott U.S.-made goods if the United States did not do away with its policy of discrimination within two months. All other treaty ports followed suit. Soon, the movement for revising the 1894 treaty spread to nearly a dozen provinces. The first to respond to the call issued in Shanghai were students and various sections of the intelligentsia, followed by the merchants. In the North, the movement instantly incurred reprisals by the viceroy of Zhili, Yuan Shikai. The authorities in the southern and eastern maritime provinces were slower to react. Besides, the scale of the movement prevented them from taking any serious repressive action.

The movement to revise the treaty with the U.S.A. was highly intensive in Guangdong, for the flow of emigrants to America, the Philippines, and Hawaii was the greatest from that province. Here, villagers joined townsmen in the protest.

The movement at once revealed the distinctions in the attitude of the various sections of the bourgeoisie. Students, urban petty bourgeois and minor capitalists were the most active. The bourgeoisie that had closer ties with foreign interests covertly opposed the movement even before the boycott, and subsequently offered it open resistance.

The committee set up in Shanghai to fight the treaty called for the boycott to start in July 1905, after it became clear that the Americans were not going to back down. In Guangdong, the boycott was officially started on 1 August.

As the boycott spread, the U.S. government addressed notes that were more like ultimatums to the Qing court. Some time later in August, the Qing issued a decree outlawing the boycott. The bigger merchants and firms responded, and edged away from the boycott. In many cases guidance of the movement passed into the hands of the more radical forces—the intelligentsia and students. In Shanghai, they concentrated themselves round the Gongzhong Yanshuohui, a society headed by Ge Zhong, who was said to have received his education in the United States. As soon as he saw that the merchantdom intended to halt the movement, he and his society publicly exposed the manoeuvres of the big traders. By and large, however, the movement began to decline.

In Guangzhou, where the newspaper, *Renounce the Treaty* (*Juyue-bao*) founded by teachers of two local secondary schools, was prominent in guiding the action, the boycott lasted until the autumn of 1905. Not until late October, when the movement began to wane, did the Guangdong governor venture to issue a ban.

Despite the failure of the boycott, and the weakness and lack of unity of the various groups of the Chinese bourgeoisie, the movement was clear evidence of the grown political, and above all national, awareness of various sections of Chinese people.

People's Struggles in 1905-1908

The new forms of the mass struggle against imperialism were also evidence of the winds of change in the country. The old-time anti-missionary riots—of which there were about a score in 1906, ten in 1907, and only a few in 1908 in the lower reaches of the Yangzi and the southern provinces—were giving way to anti-foreign boycotts and movements defending sovereign Chinese rights, railways, and mining.

Again, and visibly so, mass actions were directed against various forms of exploitation, especially against the tax burden imposed by the New Policy. The number of anti-tax actions which occurred in nearly all provinces, trebled between 1905 and 1908. Passive resistance often grew into armed conflicts. Peasants sacked tax offices, burned or otherwise destroyed tax records, attacked caravans of requisitioned corn, and beat up tax collectors, local officials, and policemen.

Rice riots swept the country in 1906 and in the following two

years as a reaction to the famine caused by natural calamities in the provinces of the Yangzi valley and in the South. In Hunan, the price of rice had doubled, and in Jiangsu ten million faced death from starvation. In these areas, large crowds of hungry peasants converged on the administrative towns, and were joined by the urban poor in demanding that officials freeze the food prices. Rioters ransacked granaries, and attacked rice caravans. Many of the riots were caused by rice hoarding and profiteering, and by the traders' removal of rice from the stricken regions to other provinces with the connivance of the authorities.

The peasants were the chief force in the anti-tax actions, while the rice riots mainly involved the urban poor. But the rising taxes and the corruption that reigned among officials also affected the interests of the more prosperous people in town and country. The class differentiation among the peasantry had barely begun, the economic and political influence of the landlords and *shenshi* was still very great, and coinciding interests in the fight against taxes brought the peasantry and the upper crust in the villages together if only for a short time. In any case, landlords and *shenshi* participated in the struggle, and their immediate influence on the mass of the people was strongly felt.

The gentry, and the impoverished officialdom in the towns, who as a rule controlled the secret societies and other traditional (clan, native) associations, introduced an element of order and organisation into the spontaneous popular actions. In many parts of the country, secret societies and other organisations, in which a considerable percentage of the population was enrolled, took it upon themselves to lead the movements against taxes and rice profiteering, and for distribution of food at low prices.

Secret societies were closely involved in the series of riots by so-called salt smugglers in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces in 1907 and 1908. The riots were against the salt tax and the state's salt monopoly. They were headed by the Blue Brotherhood, Red Brotherhood, and the Smugglers League secret societies, whose membership consisted chiefly of salt merchants, lessees of salterns, and salt retailers. In 1906 and in the following year, the government had taken drastic steps to end the contraband salt trade in the Yangzi valley. Qing troops cleared the river of salt junks, which were pushed back to Lake Taihu. As a result, large numbers of boatmen and salt traders were deprived of a livelihood. Salt traders in Zhejiang province took action, and were soon joined by the peasantry.

In late 1907 and early 1908, the riots became more and more frequent. At Hangzhou, armed detachments of secret society members destroyed railway tracks, and attacked government offices and foreign missions. Rebel detachments numbering a few thousand men

each, engaged the government troops, and fought successful battles. The societies called for abolition of the salt monopoly, for lower salt taxes, and for lower duties in kind (owing to the crop failure). The government, which had no confidence in the local garrisons due to their connections with the secret societies, despatched 20 battalions of the New Army to put down the rising, and allocated 100,000 *liang* to pay for the operation. Yet it took much effort to crush the main force of peasants and salt smugglers in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Anhui, and this only in early 1908.

The risings in the Qinzhou and Lianzhou regions of Guangdong province in 1906 and 1907 were on a relatively large scale. And these were the risings that Sun Yatsen tried to use to stimulate the revolutionary struggle in South China. The rising in Qinzhou was a reaction to the introduction of a sugar cane tax. The peasants of three districts held a gathering and refused to pay the tax. They chose Liu Siyu to be their leader, formed several armed patrols, and sent messengers to neighbouring districts. Soon, they were joined by nearly the entire population of the region, and by the troops of the local garrison. The governor backed down, and advised local officials to lower the tax. Acting through the 'righteous gentry', the chief of the region opened negotiations with the peasants. Government troops locked themselves up in the regional administrative seat, venturing on punitive forays from time to time. In fact, Liu Siyu's detachments were in complete control of the situation.

Shortly, a rising broke out in the neighbouring region of Lianzhou, precipitated by the sale of large lots of the cash crop outside the province. In May 1907, thousands of starving peasants broke into the region's administrative seat and demanded a stop to rice profiteering and sale of rice hoarded by landlords, merchants, and rich people at fixed low prices. The local authorities, frightened by the rising in neighbouring Qinzhou, agreed to take stock of the available rice. The impatient peasants began requisitioning rice from landlords and merchants. They also attacked district and county towns, sacked government offices, and raided foreign missions and schools. Not until early June, did government troops succeed in recapturing Lianzhou and quelling the insurrection.

When the 'hunger' riots in Lianzhou had been put down, the authorities massed their forces against Liu Siyu's rebel forces in Qinzhou. In June 1907, reinforcements arrived from Guangxi. The peasant detachments were no match for these superior forces. They were defeated and dispersed. Only a few managed to reach the safety of the hills, and to continue the struggle. During the hostilities, village elder Liang Jiankui and Liang Shaoting, chiefs of local secret societies, had tried to establish contact with Sun Yatsen, and had

sent messengers to Hanoi, where Sun was staying at the time, to ask him to come and direct the struggle in Qinzhou and Lianzhou.

The Founding of the Unity League

Feelings were running high among the Chinese in Japan, and in China proper. Revolutionary centres had sprung up in Central and South China. Anti-Manchu propaganda was reaching all corners of the land. The revolutionaries' ideological struggle against the reformers had never been so successful. The scene was ready for the founding of a united revolutionary political party.

In this setting, in 1905, the initiative of founding such an all-China party was taken by members of a number of revolutionary organisations living in exile in Japan. And among them, the most outstanding role was played by Sun Yatsen. Indeed, on returning to Japan from his visit to Hawaii and the United States in the spring of 1905, he was the first to speak of the need for uniting all the country's revolutionary forces. On his way from the United States, he had visited London, Brussels, Paris and Berlin to win the support of Chinese living in Europe and to sound the attitude of the European governments to the unfolding revolutionary events in China. 'In the spring of 1905,' Sun wrote later, 'when I again came to Europe, most of the students there were in favour of revolution. Gradually, they were going over from speech to action. So, I set forth to them the ideas I had nursed all my life of the Three Principles of the People and the constitution of five authorities, endeavouring to unite them on these ideas into a single revolutionary organisation.'¹ More than 60 Chinese studying in Europe did, indeed, express their wish to join the new revolutionary organisation.

Soon after Sun's return to Japan, in June 1905, negotiations with various revolutionary organisations and groups led to the decision to set up a new Chinese revolutionary party embracing all anti-Qing elements. A preparatory committee was chosen to draft the regulations and programme of the new organisation, and began its work on 28 August in Tokyo. At a meeting of the committee, Sun Yatsen set forth his opinion about the structure, the purposes, and the programme of the future party, and suggested its name—Chinese Revolutionary Unity League (*Zhongguo geming tongmenghui*). Later, the word 'revolutionary' was usually dropped for reasons of security, and the organisation known in short as the Unity League (*Tongmenghui*).

The *Tongmenghui* was officially established on 18 September at a large inaugural meeting, which elected its leadership, confirmed the membership oath and the text of the programme documents—

the regulations, and the 'declaration of the military government', in which the political programme of the new party was set forth. Proclamations were drawn up on Sun's suggestion, addressed to the population, the army, and to foreigners. The membership oath was: 'I swear before heaven and earth to expel the Manchus, restore the sovereignty of China, to establish a republic, and carry out the equalisation of land rights. I swear to be faithful to the revolution to the end. Should I break the oath, may the hand of my comrades mete out severe retribution.'²

Sun Yatsen was elected president of the Unity League, and Huang Xing, one of the organisers of the Chinese Rejuvenation League, was made his deputy. The central organ of the League, the journal *Minbao* (The People) was launched at the end of the year, propagating the political aims of the organisation and explaining its programme.

Sun directed the drafting of the programme documents, and wrote the main ones himself, such as the Declaration of the *Tongmenghui* (programme of internal policy) and the Appeal to the Foreign Powers (programme of foreign policy). The other documents, drawn up by a special commission, also conformed with Sun's platform of the Three Principles of the People: nationalism, power of the people, and people's livelihood. The terms and their explication appeared in writing for the first time in an article by Sun Yatsen in the inaugural issue of *Minbao*.

Nationalism was interpreted above all as overthrow of the alien Manchu dynasty, elimination of inequality in relations between Manchus and Chinese, establishment of a sovereign state, with all the commanding heights in Han (Chinese) hands.

To some degree, the overthrow of the Manchus was linked in the minds of the Chinese bourgeois revolutionaries with the goal of repelling imperialist encroachments and restoring China's sovereignty. The linkage was made clear in the revolutionary press and in some of the League leaders' unofficial statements. But no mention of resistance to imperialist aggression ever appeared in official documents, for this might have alienated the foreign powers and provoked them to resist the expulsion of the Qing. Also there was a mistaken view of the powers' policy. The revolutionaries hoped to secure the country's independence in two stages: first by overthrowing the Qing, and thereupon by organising resistance to foreign aggression. The League leaders hoped that the absence of any direct calls to fight off foreign aggression would win them the powers' 'benevolent neutrality' and recognition as a 'belligerent force' in the event of an armed uprising. That is why the Appeal to the Foreign Powers said that the new revolutionary authorities would honour all the old unequal treaties, and protect the property and rights of foreigners. The absence in the

League's programme of any demand to fight foreign importunities was a sign of the Chinese revolutionaries' weakness, and isolated them from the large groups of Chinese involved in various patriotic movements against foreign domination, such as the anti-American boycott and the movement for the restoration of China's sovereign rights.

In the programme of the Unity League and in the pronouncements of its leaders, the power of the people principle was interpreted to mean abolition of the monarchic system and the establishment of a republic. The Declaration of the Tongmenghui explained it thus: 'At present, the people carry out a revolution to institute a national government, all citizens take part in government. The president is elected by the entire country. Parliament is composed of deputies elected by the entire people. It draws up the Constitution of the Chinese Republic, which all shall be obliged to obey.'³

The introduction of the republican system, like the other reforms, was to go through three periods: for three years after the revolution there would be 'government by military law' in order 'to root out the evils of the past'. Under this military dictatorship all power at the centre and locally would be vested in a Military Government and in the army. Thereupon, military law would be repealed, and replaced with a provisional constitution that would serve as the basis of government in the next six years. 'Local power is transferred to the local population', while the 'military government exercises general supervision of the affairs of state', and teaches the people 'to use freedom and equality', the Declaration said of the second period. After this term expires, the Military Government abdicates its powers, and governance is exercised on the basis of a constitution that is to be drawn up by a democratically elected parliament.

Sun Yatsen worked out the fundamental principles of the future constitution in great detail. He suggested 'five authorities', that is, recommended adding two traditional feudal Chinese institutions—examination and censorial bodies—to the Western threefold plurality of legislative, executive, and juridical powers.

Sun Yatsen's principle of 'democracy'—to abolish the monarchy and establish a republican parliamentary system—accorded with the aspirations of the more radical progressive political groups in the revolutionary camp. Lenin thought very highly of this part of Sun's programme, describing it in his article, 'Democracy and Narodism in China', as 'complete democracy and the demand for a republic'.⁴

'People's livelihood', which was Sun Yatsen's third principle, reflected the social aspect of the Unity League's programme, and referred to equal rights to land. Alongside general references to 'improving the economic organisation of society', the Tongmenghui Declaration spelled out the demand for 'a fixed price for land'. In

substance, the differential rent was to be placed at the disposal of the state. In a number of statements in 1906 and 1907, Sun and some of his intimates revealed that 'equalisation of land rights' was conceived by them as a plan for codifying a land law under which the state would purchase land in excess of a specified legal limit at a price set and reported by its proprietor, and would levy a progressive land tax pegged to this declared value in the spirit of the doctrine of Henry George, the U.S. sociologist.

If this demand were carried out, it would, as Sun Yatsen saw it, prevent any crying social inequalities and any 'concentration of wealth in the hands of a few'—something that was making 'social revolutions' and recurring upheavals inevitable in Western countries. (No period or date was specified by Sun Yatsen for when land rights would be equalised.) Sun firmly believed that equalisation of land rights would prevent 'inequality between rich and poor' and thereby avert 'social revolution', leading to a 'society of justice and people's prosperity'.

During the 1911-1913 revolution, Sun Yatsen frequently explained what he meant by equalisation of land rights and nationalisation of land as a means of 'by-passing capitalism' and establishing 'state socialism'. By 'capitalists' Sun meant monopolists, and by 'capitalism' omnipotence of monopoly. He advocated 'state socialism' (for which he took Germany of that time as a model) or, to be more accurate, state capitalism. This he conceived as a plan for extending the state sector and letting the state act as regulator of the economy. Indeed, in the specific case of China of that day, equalisation of land rights and Sun's programme of 'improving society's organisation of the economy' was a progressive scheme. Examining the true content of Sun Yatsen's subjective socialism and his hope of preventing capitalism from developing in China, Lenin pointed out that Sun's economic platform really led to maximally rapid elimination of obstacles to the development of capitalism.⁵

The diversity of the social background of the members of the Unity League and its affiliated organisations—it included the anti-Manchu *shenshi*, landlords, members of the bourgeoisie, and urban and rural poor—made for a diversity of outlooks among its leaders on crucial points of the programme and on tactics. A serious controversy arose over the idea of establishing a republic. Chen Tianguhua, who had been one of the founders of the Chinese Rejuvenation League and who was an influential journalist and pamphleteer writing incisively of the need for repulsing foreign aggression, held that the most suitable political system for China was 'enlightened autocracy'. Tao Chengzhang and Zhang Taiyan, leaders of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty, while wholeheartedly in favour of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty, held that a representative

parliamentary system in China would do more harm than good. Zhang Taiyan used the example of Japan and other capitalist countries to show that parliament was really a pawn in the hands of a few rich and strong men, and initially recommended what he called 'direct democracy'. Later, he favoured handing all power to a 'hero ruler', a dictator, or preserving the monarchy if no 'outstanding personality' came to the fore.

But what caused the greatest differences and incomprehension among Unity League leaders was Sun Yatsen's social programme, notably his equalisation of land rights scheme. The landlord and *shenshi* element, along with the intelligentsia that came from its midst, thought the movement should confine itself to just driving out the Manchus. (Indeed, when the Tongmenghui was being set up they suggested naming it Revolutionary Covenant against the Manchus.) Knowing of these sentiments, Sun Yatsen, on his return from Europe to Japan, had trodden cautiously when explaining his principle of 'people's livelihood'. But differences over the issue did not end after the principle had been entrenched in the policy documents of the Unity League. Many revolutionary writers and functionaries evaded the subject altogether. Nor was it put down in the regulations of some of the affiliated organisations and branches of the League set up later.

Leaders of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty thought the equalisation of land rights idea unclear and short of the mark. In the charter which he drew up for the secret societies of Zhejiang province, Tao Chengzhang worded the demand as follows: 'Make the land the property of all society, and let not the rich acquire monopoly.'⁶ And Zhang Taiyan wrote in one of his articles, 'he who does not till the land himself must not be allowed to own it'. But his view of commercial and industrial activity was as conservative as any Confucianist's, for he called for the traditional restrictions.

In 1906 and 1907, a small group of Chinese revolutionaries emerged in Japan which, influenced by Japanese radicals, socialists, and anarchists, advanced the most radical slogans. In 1906, for example, a member of the group published an article, 'I Grieve for the Pauper', in *Minbao*, suggesting 'uncompensated expropriation of landlord estates'. Cool is a mild word to use for the response this received among the Chinese revolutionaries.

The group of Chinese revolutionaries closest to Sun Yatsen, too, came under the influence of the writings and activity of Japanese radicals, notably the socialists Kotoku Denshiro and Katayama Sen. Zhu Zhixin wrote an article, 'Brief Biographies of German Socialist Revolutionaries', published in *Minbao*, where he supplied information about the life and work of Karl Marx. He also translated and published a part of the *Communist Manifesto*, and in a number

of other articles presented some of the aspects of Marx's theory of class struggle and social revolution.

On the whole, however, social and political demands and problems were far less thoroughly dealt with in the columns of the Chinese revolutionary press of that day, and were eclipsed by anti-dynastic propaganda, by the slogan of 'expelling the Manchus', which had magnetic appeal for all members and member organisations of the Unity League. The principle of nationalism, whose treatment in revolutionary publications and in word-of-mouth propaganda was often overlaid with great-Han chauvinism, was, indeed, the mortar that cemented the ranks of the Unity League at the time the revolution was in its preparatory stage.

The establishment of the all-China revolutionary party and its action programme had a tremendous bearing on the surge of revolutionary struggle against the thoroughly decayed Manchu monarchy, and helped unite the revolutionary camp. By early 1906, the Unity League had contacts with practically all Chinese revolutionary organisations and groups active within China and overseas. The closest and most reliable ties were those with Sun Yatsen's former organisation, the Revive China Society and its chapters, and with the Chinese Rejuvenation League, the organisation of Hubei and Hunan revolutionaries. In 1906, the Tongmenghui was joined by leaders of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty—Cai Yuanpei, Tao Chengzhang, and Zhang Taiyan. Natives of various Chinese provinces resident in Japan, who had joined the Unity League, formed provincial chapters. In 1906, Sun Yatsen estimated the League's membership, including people who assisted him financially, at some 10,000.

The Constitutional Manoeuvres of the Throne

The growth of the revolutionary movement, menacing the existence of the Qing regime, naturally affected the behaviour of the ruling elite. Some top-ranking Chinese dignitaries (Zhang Zhidong, Sun Baoqi, and Cen Chunxuan among them) advised the empress dowager to make constitutional concessions in order to hold down a revolutionary outburst and win over the Chinese liberal opposition, thus pacifying the country. In the summer of 1905, in a setting of mounting disaffection, the Manchu elite made its next unwilling step to further the New Policy. On the suggestion of Yuan Shikai an imperial decree was issued in June instructing a special mission headed by Manchu dignitaries Zai Ze and Duan Fang to go abroad and study the Western system of government. Thereupon, in November, the Qing instituted a Special Commission for the Study of Government (*Kaocha zhengzhiguan*). On returning to China in July

1906 from a tour of a number of Asian countries, America and Europe, members of the mission submitted memorials advising Cixi to gradually convert her authoritarian regime into a constitutional monarchy. Duan Fang wrote in one of his memorials, for example, that 'a constitution is the only way leading to prosperity and greater military power'.⁷ He advised Cixi to set a period of some 15 to 20 years for transition to a constitutional regime, preceded by a reorganisation of the imperial administrative apparatus.

The constitutional issue brought to light deep-going differences among the courtiers. The extreme conservatives, headed by Prince Qing, war minister Tie Liang, and Rong Qing, who were all Manchus, maintained that the 'constitution would restrict the monarch's omnipotence', and would 'benefit Chinese, but not Manchus'. They tried to prevail on the empress dowager to abandon the idea of a constitution.⁸ A group of Qing dignitaries close to the Chinese feudal and compradore elements, headed by Zai Ze, Duan Fang, and Dai Hongzi, advocated gradual constitutional reform. The differences within the Qing government and Cixi's uncertainty prompted top Chinese bureaucrats to organise a petition campaign to exert pressure on the Manchu ruling clique. In the summer of 1906, Qing minister to Britain Wang Daxie petitioned Guangxu and Cixi to carry out 'changes in the system of government'. At about the same time, Liang Cheng, minister to the United States, requested the empress dowager 'to attain the chief goal more quickly and introduce a constitution', and referred to the constitutionalist sentiment among Chinese living in the U.S.A. The Beijing government's minister of education, Zhang Boxi, assistant minister for appointments Tang Jingchong, provincial viceroys Cen Chunxuan and Lin Shaonian, and other men of substance, submitted petitions to the same effect.⁹

On 1 September 1906, the Qing government published an imperial edict on preparing the country for the introduction of a constitution. 'Now, after thorough study and in accordance with the needs of the times,' it said, 'it is proper to introduce constitutional government in China as well, so that all supreme power should belong to the emperor, and the people should have the right to participate in the discussion of questions of government... But at the present time, in the absence of dependable foundations for a constitution, can hasty measures inspire confidence in the projected reforms among the population when no system of government has been worked out and the consciousness of the people is still undeveloped? That is why, as we start to root out chronic abuses and to determine the obligations redounding on everyone, it is best to first tackle the administrative system. To begin with, it is essential to discuss the matter of distributing functions in the administrative system, and

only thereafter begin to carry out reforms; it is also essential to re-examine the various laws, to advance education, buttress the country's economy, reorganise the army, establish a police, and acquaint the people with the system of governance in order to build a foundation for the introduction of a constitution.'¹⁰

The 'constitutional' edict of 1906 was nothing more than a statement of intent, and offered the Qing government boundless opportunities for manoeuvre and delay. From September 1906, when the edict was published, until September 1907, the Qing took several purely formal measures—adding a few ministries in Beijing, announcing an administrative reform in Manchuria, and converting the Committee for Government Affairs (Duban zhengwuchu) into a Committee for the Study of Political Matters (Huiyi zhengwuchu) and the Committee for the Study of the Administrative System into a Committee for Constitutional Reform (Xianzhen bianchaguan). Nothing at all was done under the programme for 'preparing the constitution'.

In the autumn of 1907, disturbed by the mounting dissatisfaction in the country, the Qing started a new round of constitutional manoeuvres. Four edicts were issued in two months (September and October) in 'preparation of the constitution', notably the edict of 20 September establishing in Beijing a Supreme Consultative Chamber (Zizhengyuan) and that of 15 October instituting Consultative Assemblies (Ziyiju) in the provinces. A second 'constitutional mission' was sent abroad, headed by Qing dignitaries Da Shou, Yu Shimei, and Wang Daxie. These manoeuvres were additional evidence of the crisis gripping the top echelons of power. Essentially, coupled with other New Policy actions, they were an attempt to extend the social base of the Qing regime, and to win over the Chinese bourgeoisie and liberal landlords.

The court's manoeuvres were also an outcropping of the continuous conflict within the ruling elite. The constitutional demands of the big Chinese bureaucrats were largely powered by the wish of ending the monopoly privileges of the Manchus and of loosening the latter's grip on the administrative system. The leaders of the Chinese group were, therefore, much more keenly conscious of the compulsive need for political change than the empress dowager's Manchu clique. For this reason, certain Chinese feudal dignitaries were inclined to support the constitutional movement of the moderate bourgeois-landlord opposition, and to use it in pressuring the ultra-conservative Qing leadership.

High-ranking Chinese metropolitan and provincial bureaucrats had close ties with the constitutional movement inside the country (Zhang Jian, Tang Shouqian, and so on). They were also anxious to establish contacts with the Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao group residing

abroad. In fact, Yuan Shikai recommended one of the leaders of the group, a certain Yang Du, to lecture Manchu princes on constitutional law. Subsequently, Yang was appointed to the Constitutional Reform Commission. In 1907, Yuan Shikai also contributed funds to Liang Qichao's press in Japan and supplied cash to overseas constitutionalists entrenched in the Association for the Study of Political Problems (Zhengwenshe). Similar financial aid to the constitutional monarchy movement came from Chinese provincial viceroys Cen Chunxuan and Lu Rongting, and Chinese diplomats Sun Baoqi, Wang Daxie, and Lu Zhengxiang.

This laid the groundwork for the alliance of Chinese bourgeois-landlord elements and Chinese feudal bureaucrats of the ruling elite against the surging revolutionary movement. Under guise of 'preparing the constitution', the Manchu clique sought to centralise the state apparatus and buttress its monopoly on power in order to secure a tighter hold on spheres where its grip was weakest, notably the army and provincial finances. In 1905-1907, the Qing occupied themselves with reorganising and setting up ministries in the imperial capital, and launched administrative reforms in the north-eastern and other provinces. This was done essentially to oust Chinese bureaucrats from key posts and concentrate still more power in the hands of Manchu courtiers.

While paying lip service to 'Manchu-Chinese equality', the Qing court went back on its promises when making appointments to new ministries: out of the thirteen newly appointed ministers and board chairmen, seven were of the Manchu nobility, two (a Mongol and a Chinese) of the eightbanner estate, and only four belonged to the Chinese feudal bureaucracy. Though in the Military Council seats were formally divided equally between Manchus and Chinese, the reins were held firmly by Prince Qing, a Manchu. The ultra-conservatives of Manchu group also resorted to the ruse of transferring top Chinese viceroys from the provinces to offices in the capital, where they could be more easily controlled. In 1907, for example, Yuan Shikai was removed from his post of viceroy of Zhili on the pretext of a 'shortage of capable officials to organise the preparations for a constitution'. He was granted the 'honourable title' of member of the Military Council, transferred to the foreign ministry in Beijing, and thereby came under the control of Prince Qing. Zhang Zhidong, too, who had been viceroy of Hunan and Hubei, was transferred to the imperial capital. But in the final analysis this policy only isolated the Manchu clique, reduced its power base, and widened the fissures in the bloc of Manchu-Chinese feudalists.

Political Action for Constitutional Monarchy

The revolutionary opposition to the Qing regime had the effect of stimulating the political activity of the constitutionalist camp, which consisted of the bulk of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and liberal Chinese landlords. Their class interests made the liberals oppose the reactionary policies of the feudal Manchu-Chinese ruling elite, which obstructed the development of capitalist relations, and the defeatist foreign policy of the Qing court. On the other hand, the liberals were farthest from the thought of settling their quarrel with the ruling camp by revolutionary action. Their course was one of concessions and settlements. The organised countrywide movement of the Chinese liberal bourgeois-landlord element unfolded, therefore, under the slogan of constitutional monarchy.

Dreading the spread of revolutionary sentiments, the ideologists of the liberal opposition endeavoured to show that a revolution would inevitably cause a lengthy period of turmoil and war, public dislocation and, ultimately, partitioning and collapse. 'Three years of turbulence in modern China is more than enough for the state to go down,' wrote Liang Qichao.¹¹ The liberals made the most of the revolutionary movement to exert pressure on the Qing, prodding them towards constitutionalism. This, they promised, would stabilise the political situation in the country.

The first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, portrayed by the liberal press as an outburst against autocracy that nothing on earth could have averted because the autocrat had refused to introduce a constitution, made a strong impression on the Chinese bourgeois-landlord opposition. As Liang Qichao saw it, the Russian revolution would act as a powerful stimulant for China's political regeneration, spurring diehard conservatives in the Qing government to grant constitutional concessions. 'If the people of Russia are successful,' Liang wrote, 'we shall see how the awesome government [of Russia] will find itself constrained to submit to the will of its people. This fact may be ignored by our old and backward grandees, but certainly not by those who have a conscience and human spirit. When the people become aware of their support, they are sure to take heart. And that will influence the solution of administrative issues in our country.'¹²

The liberal opposition also exploited the outcome of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. Its press emphasised the advantages of Japan's constitutional monarchy over Russian autocracy. For the Chinese constitutionalists, Japan's victory was an additional argument in favour of having a constitution introduced in China.

The Shanghai press contributed greatly to the propagation of the constitutional idea, among them the newspapers *Shibao* (The Epoch)

and *Zhongwai ribao* (China and the West), and the journals *Dongfang zazhi* (The East), *Yangzijiang*, and *Waijiaobao* (International Ties). In 1904, *Dongfang zazhi* grew into the most widely read and influential organ of the liberal landlord opposition. Like the other organs here listed, it urged the earliest introduction of a bourgeois constitutional monarchy, democratisation of the administrative system from top to bottom, and a bigger part in government for the Chinese bourgeoisie and liberal landlords.

Towards the close of 1906, a Joint Association for the Promotion of the Constitution (Yubei Lixian gonghui) was founded in Shanghai on the initiative of Zhang Jian, a prominent Jiangsu industrialist. It absorbed the constitutionalists of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Anhui provinces—merchants, industrialists, officials, and the liberal *shenshi* gentry. Its membership thus reflected its social class basis. Though officially its purpose was 'to prepare the national consciousness for the introduction of a constitution; this conforming with the spirit of the imperial edict of 1 September 1906, it soon developed into the chief political centre of the liberal bourgeois-landlord movement.

Soon, similar 'constitutional' societies began springing up in other provinces—the Society for the Preparation of a Constitutional Order (Xianzheng choubenhui) in Hubei, the United Constitutional League (Xianzheng gonghui) in Hunan, the Self-Government Society (Zizhihui) in Guangdong, and so on. The purpose of these organisations was to agitate for a constitutional monarchy, to collect signatures to petitions and thereby build up the pressure on the ruling elite.

Though these early constitutionalist organisations were few in number and initially had only a small membership, and though there was no connection between them to speak of, they were clear evidence that the political movement of the liberal bourgeois-landlord element was gaining organisational form.

The emergence of constitutionalist unions in the provinces was the effect of the economic consolidation of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Commercial and industrial associations and committees were proliferating fast. There were also numerous anti-foreign boycotts, and campaigns for 'the return of rights stolen by foreigners'. These actions, inspired by the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and liberal landlords, also involved considerable sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie, artisans and workers, thus helping to widen the social base of the constitutionalist movement.

Abroad, and especially in Japan, there was a visible resurgence of political activity among the reformist emigrants. In August 1907, Liang Qichao joined Jiang Zhiyou, Ma Liang, Xu Fosu, Mai Menghua, and other reformers to organise in Tokyo an Association for the Study of Political Problems. The organisation took in reformers then resident in Japan. Its purpose was to rally the followers of Kang

Youwei and Liang Qichao for the new tactical platform devised to promote constitutional monarchy. Liang planned, however, to subsequently develop the Association into a legal political centre directing the fight for a constitutional monarchy in China proper. It had a journal of its own, *Zhenglun* (Political Gazette), launched in Shanghai in October 1907.

The Association's Declaration, written by Liang Qichao, was an important document of the liberal reformist camp, calling for early convocation of a parliament and establishment of a government responsible to parliament. These were, indeed, the central tactical slogans of the constitutional monarchists. In addition, it contained the demand for local self-government; revision of the legislative system; separation of juridical and administrative functions, and so on. Though the section on foreign policy contained no direct call for mass struggle against imperialist aggression, it did reflect the liberal opposition's intention to use the constitutional movement to counter the defeatist foreign policy of the Qing government and the pressures exerted on China by foreign powers.

Liang wrote caustically of the 'decay of the present government'. He said 'all the evil of current policy is the result of the government's activity', and averred that 'all current innovations (New Policy reforms—*Ed.*) smell of rot', and the like.¹³ He scorned the idea of any reorganisation of government by a monarch, and wrote that 'the responsibility for reorganising the government must be borne by the people'.¹⁴ The Declaration referred in clear terms to the need for winning the people to the side of the liberal opposition and using its political potential for pressure on the Qing government. It called for setting up an organisation that would 'give voice to the opinion of the people' and would subsequently grow into a political party. In sum, the liberal opposition was coming forward with demands whose realisation would give it hegemony in the all-China constitutionalist movement.

The Declaration reflected the contradictions in the programme and tactics of the liberal opposition, which in turn mirrored the complex and conflicting nature of its social base.

'The methods of the Political Association,' the Declaration said, 'do not go beyond the framework of lawful demands. It does not even occur to us to undermine the authority of the imperial family. The activity of the Association will in no way breach law and order in the country, and will not on the whole transcend the limits of what people practise in countries where a constitution has already been introduced.'¹⁵

The contradictions in the programme and tactics of the liberal opposition also came to the surface in its political activity during the petition campaigns for the earliest convocation of a parliament.

The Petition Campaign of 1907-1908

The delaying tactics of the Qing and their use of constitutional manoeuvres for the 'self-strengthening' of the Manchu clique created widespread disappointment and unrest. The bourgeois-landlord element stepped up political pressure on the Qing by means of petition campaigns. Initially, petitions urging early convocation of a parliament were submitted to the government by individual constitutionalist organisations and even separate individuals. But as ties developed between various provincial societies, and as other sections of the people joined the fight for a constitution, and as the scale of constitutionalist propaganda grew, the petition campaigns developed into an organised movement of the entire bourgeois-landlord opposition.

In October 1907, a group of Chinese emigrants in South-East Asia was the first to send a collective petition to the Qing government, asking for a constitution to be introduced more quickly. Thereupon, a group of Hunan constitutionalists representing the Society for the Study of Constitutional Government headed by Xiong Fanyu went to Beijing and submitted a petition to the Censorate insisting on the earliest possible convocation of a parliament. In their wake, constitutionalist societies in other provinces also began writing petitions.

The leaders of the Association in Tokyo looked for an opportunity to return to China to set up chapters of their organisation in various provinces and to direct the petition campaign. In February 1908, the Association moved its headquarters from Tokyo to Shanghai's International Settlement. And soon, on the initiative of Ma Liang and Xu Fosu, a Society for the Earliest Convocation of Parliament (*Guohui qicheng hui*) was founded there. Leaders of the Association went to the provinces to establish contacts with local constitutionalist societies, and to co-ordinate activity. They also sought closer ties with the commercial and industrial elements in the country. Student meetings were held under their guidance, calling for constitutional government.

The Association and other constitutionalist bodies helped to build up the petition campaign in the provinces, with officials, literati, merchants, and students sending the government a steady flow of petitions asking for a constitution and parliament. In May 1908, *shenshi* of Anhui province met to pass a resolution calling for the earliest convocation of a parliament. In June, Guangdong constitutionalists sent spokesmen to Beijing to submit a petition to the same effect. The Society for Constitutional Monarchy, claiming to represent overseas Chinese resident in 200 ports of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, sent a petition to the Censorate, insisting that parliament should be convened without further delay and that it

should adopt a constitution. Crowning the campaign, in July a telegram was despatched to the Constitutional Reform Commission on behalf of all members of the Association for the Study of Political Problems, demanding that parliament should be convened within three years.

The Joint Association for the Promotion of the Constitution led by Zhang Jian took an active part in the petition movement. Early in 1908, a leader of its Jiangsu-Zhejiang centre, Zheng Xiaoxu, drew up a collective petition to the Qing government asking for a parliament and constitution. Thereupon, the Association offered constitutionalist organisations in other provinces to send a joint delegation to Beijing and submit a collective petition to the Censorate. The response was immediate and enthusiastic. In August, the constitutionalist societies of Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Henan, Anhui, Zhili, and other provinces sent delegates to Beijing. Petitions to the Censorate were signed by liberal landlords, merchants, industrialists, and so on. The petition from Zhejiang, for example, bore 18,000 signatures, that from Guangdong 11,000, Jilin more than 4,000, and Shandong more than 2,000. The petition campaign kept gaining momentum, growing into a mass movement.

In a bid to hold down the constitutionalist movement, the Qing government banned the Association for the Study of Political Problems as of August 1908. The text of the ban showed that the Qing were seriously disturbed by the scope of the movement. Viceroy and provincial governors were ordered to crack down on the organisation, and 'strictly punish' its members 'not short of arresting them and giving them no opportunity to escape punishment'.¹⁶ Censorship of the constitutionalist press was tightened. The ban on the Association, coupled with the closure by the Shanghai authorities of the journal *Zheng lun*, left the Liang Qichao group without a political centre in mainland China.

The Qing government did not have the courage, however, to clamp down on provincial constitutionalist organisations that had no formal connection with the Association. Their leaders, such as Zhang Jian, Tang Shouqian, Chen Zipei, Zheng Xiaoxu, and Pu Dianjun, who belonged to the merchant, industrial, and landlord milieu, had considerable influence and were closely associated with top-ranking provincial bureaucrats. Many Chinese viceroys and governors, too, tended to exert pressure on the Manchu clique in favour of constitutionalism, each for his own reasons. In 1907, for example, Cheng Dequan, governor of Heilongjian, memorialised the emperor, urging him to set up a parliament and ordain a constitution. And in August 1908, the governors of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Shandong, and viceroy of the North-Eastern provinces Zhao Erxun, among others, addressed telegrams to Beijing, seeking an early con-

vocation of parliament.

To defuse the political tension in the country and perhaps neutralise the liberal bourgeoisie and landlords, the Qing ventured on one more manoeuvre: in September 1908, they published the Basic Principles of Constitutional Law and a nine-year programme of constitutional reforms drafted by the Constitutional Reform Commission. The regime promised to convene a parliament and establish a constitution in 1916. The draft was clear evidence that the ruling clique employed its constitutional manoeuvres with the sole purpose of centralising power and thereby concentrating it in the hands of the Manchu nobility. The Manchu emperor, the list of whose prerogatives was the centrepiece of the draft, would wield colossal power in the 'constitutional' Daqing Empire. In effect, he would control all legislative, executive, and juridical affairs in the country.

'The Emperor possesses supreme power in governing the Empire,' it said in the draft. 'All affairs related to legislation, governance and the judiciary are subject to his general supervision.... The sanctity and dignity of the monarch are inviolable.... Any law passed by parliament but not vouchsafed by the Emperor, is of no validity even if published.'¹⁷ The right to convene and dissolve parliament, to appoint and dismiss officials, the supreme military command, and so on, were all to be vested in the person of the Manchu monarch. Parliament was to be no more than a consultative body. The 'rights of the people' were confined to 'paying duties and taxes in accordance with the law, and serving with the troops', and, of course, 'obeying the laws and regulations of the state'.¹⁸

In effect, the draft of 1908 was designed to entrench the prerogatives of the Manchu emperor, merely adding a 'constitutional' complexion to the system of government. The nine-year programme for instituting the constitution contained no guarantees of its ever being put into effect, and was, therefore, no basis for any deal between the government and the liberal bourgeoisie and landlords.

Revolutionaries Fight the Constitutional Monarchists and the Qing Monarchy

Propagating the principles of the Unity League, Sun Yatsen and his associates came to grips with spokesmen of the liberal reformist and constitutionalist camp. With the throne's constitutional maneuvers of 1905 reviving the reformers' hopes that the court would grant a constitution and pursue reform, the basic principles of the Unity League's programme became the target of ferocious attacks by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and others. At the heart of the bitter controversy between revolutionaries, reformers, and constitutionalists—

and this until the 1911 revolution—were the four principal issues: Was the anti-Manchu complexion of the revolution right or wrong? Would the powers intervene militarily in the event of a revolution? What should be the shape of the future administrative system? What programme of social change should be adopted? The polemic was conducted chiefly by the main revolutionary organ, *Minbao*, and the leading periodical put out by the reformers, *Xinmin congbao* (Rejuvenation of the People).

The leaders of the revolutionary camp showed in *Minbao* and other publications that the reformers' opposition to a 'national revolution', that is, to the idea of deposing the Manchu dynasty, and their references to the 'supreme interests of the state' amounted to denial that there was inequality between Manchus and Chinese. The reformists, they showed, were out to safeguard the Manchu throne and the monarchic system in general, and to discredit the idea of revolutionary action against the decayed Qing regime. Revolutionaries maintained that the promise of a constitution was no more than a Qing manoeuvre. What China needed, they showed, was not half-baked constitutional reform granted from above, but total regeneration of the political system, which would be enshrined in a republican constitution following the revolutionary abolition of the monarchy.

In *Xinmin congbao*, Liang Qichao, contrary to his own past pronouncements, protested that since there were no distinctions between Manchus and Chinese, the idea of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty and other anti-Manchu ideas were irrelevant and meaningless; the interests of the state, he maintained, stood above the interests of its Chinese and Manchu subjects, the friction between whom should be eliminated after the more urgent problems of the state as a whole were duly settled.

Since they stuck up for the Qing monarchy, the reformers naturally opposed the idea of a republic. They maintained that the fight to overthrow the Manchus could mean the end of China or lead to a tyranny still worse than that of the Qing because 'the people were wholly unprepared for democratic forms of governance'. The road to democracy, they claimed, had a number of intermediate junctions, and first of all a long period of 'enlightened autocracy' and constitutional monarchy. Liang Qichao extolled the Qing's promises of a constitution, portraying them as the bloodless path to essential and necessary political change as distinct from the 'destructive' methods proposed by the revolutionaries.

The revolutionaries, on the other hand, called for a 'national' and 'political' revolution. *Minbao* wrote that nothing but the overthrow of the Manchus—eliminating national inequality and political oppression—'can root out the slave psychology implanted by the Manchus over the centuries, and prepare the country in the shortest possible

time for democratic forms of government'. Monarchy, even of the enlightened kind, revolutionaries argued, would only perpetuate the policy of humiliating and befuddling the people.

Sun Yatsen's followers laid special emphasis in their *Minbao* articles on the need for 'social revolution'. They elaborated on Sun's idea that the country could not be regenerated without social revolution, which, they pointed out, would preclude public turmoil in future. A strikingly persuasive article, 'Simultaneously Performing Social and Political Revolution', was contributed to *Minbao* in 1906 by Zhu Zhixin, who was then deeply engrossed in various socialist theories.

The reformers assailed Sun Yatsen's principles of people's livelihood, equalisation of land rights, and nationalisation of land. In a special article on the subject for *Xinmin congbao* in 1906, Liang Qichao cried down the social demands of the revolutionaries and warned against their idea of simultaneous 'national, political, and social revolution'. These slogans, and attempts to put them into effect, he wrote, were contrary to the sanctity of property rights; they would inflict 'injustice on landowners', would precipitate mob rule and chaos, and lead to the country's collapse inasmuch as 'social revolution' was liable to uproot the pillars that held up society, and bring down the power of the propertied, resulting in autocracy of the poor.

In their polemics about the methods of change (revolution or reform), both camps showed their apprehensions over the probable behaviour of the imperialist powers. The reformers argued that revolution would 'cause turbulence, outside intervention, and China's partitioning'. Liang Qichao invoked this formula in practically all his attacks on the revolutionaries.

The rebuttal of Sun's followers was, in effect, inconsistent. It was a Unity League tactic at that stage to abstain from any public calls for struggle against foreign aggression. They maintained, and this rightly, that partitioning was not a remote threat but quite a real danger. As they saw it, nothing but revolution could save China from partitioning, because it would 'give impulse to the spread of the ideas of independence and democracy', and unite the people of China. They hinted, too, that if foreigners backed the Qing against a revolution, the explosion this was likely to trigger could be far more dangerous to the aggressors than the Boxer uprising.

But, by and large, being unprepared to organise nationwide resistance to imperialist aggression, and hoping to neutralise the powers at the time of the revolution with assurances that they recognised all earlier treaties, the revolutionaries argued that the powers would refrain from partitioning China because that would upset the 'power balance' in the Far East. This argument, however, left open the question of other forms of imperialist counter-revolutionary inter-

ference. Still, the revolutionaries' exposure of bourgeois liberals and constitutionalists as champions of the Manchu monarchy greatly helped to consolidate the revolutionary camp ideologically and politically, and furthered the spread of revolutionary sentiment up and down the country.

To dethrone the Qing, leaders of the Unity League fixed on an armed uprising. A special committee was formed to direct the insurrection. Most League leaders favoured 'local revolutions', meaning revolts at certain key points of South and Central China. Following seizure of certain territories, they hoped to get the foreign powers to recognise them as a belligerent party. Thereupon, the revolutionaries expected to win support in other parts of the country, bring the rebel troops into a single revolutionary army, and march on Beijing. Sun Yatsen and his followers held that the southern provinces were the best place to start the action. Spokesmen of the Chinese Rejuvenation League argued, on the other hand, that the uprising had the best chances of success in Hunan and Hubei provinces, where their organisation was active. There was also a plan for 'revolution at the centre', meaning seizure of power in Beijing (by means of a conspiracy), and thereupon establishment of control over the provinces. The advocates of both plans agreed that insurrection against the Qing was overdue and that any armed rising would instantly win general support. They counted on the secret societies associated with the Unity League and on the small groups of revolutionaries who had had military training to act as the attack force in the initial actions.

The secret societies of that period presented a bizarre picture. Some of them, chiefly in the southern provinces, known under the common name of Triad, were still anti-Manchu and anti-government. But far and away the larger number, chiefly in the Yangzi valley, had degenerated into lodges of countrymen, and often enough into semi-criminal bands. For reasons of safety they were joined by people from different walks of life, notably by *declassé* elements: dislocated peasants, artisans, and runaway soldiers. The societies were commonly headed by *shenshi* or landlords, former soldiers or officials, and were invariably used by them for personal ends. The revolutionaries had access to their services, for secret society elders allowed use of their members for a certain financial consideration. But this confronted Unity League leaders with a money problem, and as time went on they came to feel that secret societies were neither dependable nor strong enough, and that who they should rely on mainly were New Army soldiers and officers enrolled in various revolutionary organisations. In 1905 and later, members of the Unity League had attended military academies in Japan and China, had associated and made contact with members of the armed forces, and many had themselves gone into the army. This change of course, spurred largely by lessons

drawn from armed actions in 1906 and the following two years, involved heated collisions within the leadership, which included some secret society elders. But it had a beneficial effect, and helped consolidate the strength of the revolutionary camp.

In the spring of 1906, a group of Unity League members (Liu Daoyi, Cai Shaonan, and others) returned to Hunan from Japan to organise an action with the help of local secret societies. They set up their clandestine headquarters in a little town of Pingxiang county, where in mid-1906 a council of secret society elders resolved to establish a single organisation, named Hongjianghui, whose manifesto (Manifesto of the National Army of China) called for the overthrow of the monarchy, establishment of a republic, and equalisation of land rights. But many members of the old secret societies did not join the new organisation. Among them was the chief of the biggest secret society active in the locality, the Hongfuhui, who objected to the idea of abolishing monarchy. His society was bent on overthrowing the Manchu dynasty, but only in order to instal a 'lawful' Chinese emperor.

In the summer of 1906, the Hongjianghui began recruiting followers, raising funds, and buying arms. Through the secret societies, it succeeded in recruiting some 3,000 peasants and miners of the Anyuan collieries in Pingxiang county, several hundred peasants in Liuyang county, and some former soldiers of deactivated units along with part of the men and officers from the meagre garrisons of Liling county. A few Hongjianghui leaders affiliated with the Unity League left for Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Shanghai to establish contacts with revolutionaries there, and intended thereupon to visit Tokyo and co-ordinate the plan and time of the uprising with Sun Yatsen.

But local developments upset their plans. In the autumn of 1906, the authorities in Liling county, alarmed by the lively activity of the secret societies, carried out wholesale arrests. In retaliation, the secret societies in Pingxiang county took advantage of the autumn harvest holiday to call out the peasants under the slogan, 'Great turmoil is about to break out in the Under-Heaven, and the braves have risen to destroy the rich and help the poor.' An insurrection began, but the small groups of armed men were quickly crushed by the authorities. Cai Shaonan and other revolutionaries, who were on the point of leaving for Japan, were compelled to hasten back to Hunan. Here, putting their heads together, they and the elders of secret societies drew up a master plan, according to which the miners of Pingxiang were to capture Anyuan, while other armed detachments seized control of Liuyang and Liling. Then, joining forces, they would march on Changsha. The secret societies in the north-eastern counties of the province were to capture Nanchang, the

administrative seat of neighbouring Jiangxi province. The leaders failed to come to terms about the date of the general uprising. Some suggested the beginning of 1907 on the grounds that there was still a shortage of arms and no promise of aid from outside.

While the arguments went back and forth, the uprising broke out in November 1906 in the shape of local armed clashes with the authorities. And in early December, a secret society elder issued the signal for action without asking for the consent of the rest. Orders to start the uprising were sent to all counties on 4 December. A hastily gathered army of 20,000 seized the township of Shanglishi in Pingxiang county on 7 December. The slogans on its banners read, 'Down the Manchus, long live China' and 'Officials oppress, people rebel'. Armed units of the local lodge of the Hongjianghui went into action in Liling county, and units of the Hongfuhui followed suit in Liuyang. The coalminers tried to make contact with the detachment in Shanglishi and jointly march on the county seat, but were intercepted and dispersed by eight battalions sent against them by Zhang Zhidong, the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei. Their leader was killed, and only small bands of miners managed to join the main rebel force.

Despite the absence of co-ordinated guidance, a large part of Hunan province came under rebel control in the early half of December. The homes of rich men, officials, and leaders of the landlord militia were set ablaze. But by mid-December a considerable government force, including units of the New Army, was rushed in from other provinces, and crushed the insurgents in Liling county. Large-scale fighting followed in Pingxiang county. Rebel detachments withdrew to Liuyang county. Here, Hongjianghui and Hongfuhui forces, acting independently, attempted several times to capture the county seat. The Pingxiang unit was routed at the approaches to Liuyang on 12 December, whereupon the Hongfuhui braves retreated to Pingxiang county owing to shortages of men and arms. Here, on 20 December, in the final big battle, they were defeated by government troops. Thereupon, the authorities started mopping up, and in three months killed more than 10,000 of those who had participated in the rising, including more than a hundred secret society elders.

The Unity League representatives did not succeed to overcome the separatism, localism, and other weaknesses of secret societies. The Pingxiang rising had failed due to lack of outside support. The Unity League people in Hunan had had no opportunity to contact the Tokyo centre. Sun Yatsen and Huang Xing, who learned of the Pingxiang events from Japanese newspapers, tried to organise supporting actions in Jiangsu, Anhui and Jiangxi, but nearly all Unity League couriers were seized by the Qing authorities before reaching their destinations. On the mainland, members of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty (Tao Chengzhang, and Qiu Jin) based in Zhejiang had

intended to back up the Hunan rebels. They planned to set in motion secret societies in a number of Zhejiang counties in December and attack Nanjing, with a simultaneous rising within the city. But agitators active within the Nanjing garrison were arrested, and when Huang Xing informed Tao and Qiu that government troops were on the move, they decided to call off the rising.

For a time, the failure of the Pingxiang insurrection paralysed the revolutionaries in Central China. The reprisals showered on them by the authorities affected not only Hunan, but also Hubei.

In 1905, Liu Jingan, a member of Kexue buxisuo, a revolutionary organisation formed in Hubei in 1904, made use of a missionary reading-room in Wuhan known as Sunday Knowledge Society (Rizhihui) to disseminate revolutionary propaganda. In early 1906, local revolutionaries decided to set up an organisation under cover of the reading-room, and gave it the same name. In summer, Sun Yatsen sent a delegate to establish ties and make the Sunday Knowledge Society a branch of the Unity League. But the Hubei people, though willing to have contacts, refused the offer of membership. Sun's attempts to have the Sunday Knowledge Society back up the Pingxiang rising failed, for his couriers fell into the hands of the police. The action planned in Hubei came to the knowledge of the authorities. The head of the organisation, Lui Jingan, was eliminated. The Sunday Knowledge Society fell apart, and there was no revolutionary activity in the province throughout 1907. But the following year, surviving members of the Sunday Knowledge Society formed a number of small revolutionary groups. These were distinctive organisations in that patriotic students and literati shared company in them with men and officers of the local garrison. A few of the groups sprang up directly within the New Army.

Following the defeat of the Pingxiang rising, part of the Unity League leadership, along with Sun Yatsen, decided to shift the practical effort to southern provinces—Guangdong, Yunnan, and Guangxi. For this reason, and because difficulties had arisen with the Japanese authorities owing to Qing demarches and notes, Sun Yatsen and other Unity League members moved to Hanoi in February 1907. Their contacts with the French colonial authorities, who hoped to use the revolutionaries to extend French influence in South China, enabled them, at least for a time, to start up activities in the French colony. But part of the Unity League's governing body and the *Minbao* offices stayed on in Tokyo.

In Hanoi, Sun Yatsen set about forming armed rebel detachments, drawing for recruits on the local Chinese communities. He aimed to send them into China across the southern border, and counted on the support of the small Chinese garrisons contacted by revolutionaries in some of the southern commanderies whose mood was anti-government.

In May 1907, in Chaozhou prefecture (Guangdong province), peasants and urban poor revolted against the rising price of rice. The leader of an anti-government group in Huanggang, who knew Sun Yatsen and was associated with the Unity League, came to terms with a local organisation called Hongmen to start an armed uprising. A detachment consisting of Hongmen members, joined by peasants and urban poor, captured the town and held it for five days. The rebels tried to set up a new local administration. On receiving word that a punitive expedition was approaching, a rebel force headed for Jinzhou and engaged a superior force of government infantry and artillery. The latter soon captured Huanggang, cut off routes of escape, and crushed the insurgents.

Learning of the Chaozhou rising, Sun Yatsen sent his people to yet another Guangdong prefecture, Huizhou, to set alight one more revolt in support of the rebels. On 2 June, Sun's emissary got the local secret society to start an uprising, which soon spread to the neighbouring county. The rebels were poorly armed, however, and their ammunition ran out in a few weeks. Since there was no outside help, they cached what weapons they had, and dispersed.

Lianzhou and Qinzhou regions in Guangdong province were shaken by anti-tax riots throughout the autumn and winter of 1907. The authorities massed fairly large troops there, but the Unity League leadership in Hanoi clamoured for action. Sun Yatsen had reason to believe that two Chinese units stationed in the area would take the side of the insurgents, because their commanders had been connected with the revolutionary movement when attending military academies in Japan.

The rising in Qinzhou broke out in early September. The insurgents assaulted and captured the town of Fangcheng. In mid-September, armed clashes swept across two counties in neighbouring Guangxi, where a rebel force of some 20,000 was poised to attack the large city of Nanning. Sun Yatsen had made advance arrangements with Unity League headquarters in Tokyo to supply funds and arms. But the supplies bought in Japan did not arrive at the pre-arranged time. Seeing weakness of the rebel army, the army officers Sun Yatsen had counted on for support backed out. Fearing government reprisals, they went into the field against the revolutionary force. It did not take the Qing troops long to drive the rebels into the mountains, while crushing seats of rebellion in Guangdong.

Sun Yatsen and Huang Xing thereupon decided to take their detachment from Vietnam across the border into Guangxi, and then, combining forces with surviving rebel units, to capture the province and mount a northerly offensive. Towards the end of 1907, Sun and Huang set out for the mountain pass of Zhennanguan at the head of several hundred men, and on 1 December captured the fort guard-

ing the pass. Sun himself directed the charge. But the authorities sent a strong force to the area, which blocked further progress. The unequal clash lasted for seven days, whereupon Sun and the remnants of his troop were compelled to withdraw.

The setbacks that had succeeded one another in 1906 and 1907 complicated matters in the Unity League. By early 1907, it was clear that the revolutionary centres in the central and maritime regions of China that had joined the League in 1905 and 1906 were about to split away.

In spring, after Sun had left for Hanoi, Hunan and Hubei members of the Unity League defected and set up a new organisation, which they called Universal Progress League (Gongjinhui). The reason why they defected was the shift of emphasis in Unity League activity to southern provinces, coupled with Sun Yatsen's and his followers' critical attitude towards using secret societies in the Yangzi valley, with which the Universal Progress League leaders had a close relationship. The differences also concerned the programme: the manifesto of the Universal Progress League made no mention of Sun Yatsen's third principle.

True, some Progress League leaders still recognised Sun Yatsen as head of all Chinese revolutionaries, and claimed that they were members of the Unity League. In effect, however, the organisation operated autonomously for a number of years. At the close of 1908, the leaders of the Universal Progress League returned to China and established a revolutionary centre in Hankou.

At the close of 1907, a group from the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty, the leading organisation of the maritime revolutionary centre in Shanghai, also changed course. Its ties with the Unity League had, indeed, never been dependable. Its representatives had not attended the Unity League's inaugural meeting in 1905, and only a few of the more prominent of its leaders joined the Unity League the following year: Cai Yuanpei, who became head of the Shanghai branch of the Unity League, Zhang Taiyan, who became editor of *Minbao*, and Tao Chenzhang, who was connected with revolutionaries and secret societies in Zhejiang province. A number of prominent personalities from the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty—Xu Xilin, Xiong Chengji, Qiu Jin, and others—stayed out of the Unity League in 1906-1908, and had only sporadic ties with revolutionaries in other provinces.

In 1906, members of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty established a centre disguised as a private school in the town of Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. Its leader was China's first woman revolutionary, the poetess Qiu Jin. She had joined the League in 1903 under the impression and influence of revolutionary books, took part that year in establishing the first girls school in Shanghai, where she

propagated anti-Manchu ideas, and in 1904 helped launch China's first women's newspaper for which she wrote revolutionary articles. From 1906 on, she took an active part in preparing armed actions. The Shaoxing school engaged in military training of patriotic young people and members of secret societies in Zhejiang.

Xu Xilin, also a member of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty, finished a police college in Japan, and in 1906, on Tao Chenzhang's suggestion, bought himself the post of *daotai* (chief of police). Winning the trust of the governor of Anhui province, he founded a police school in Anqing, intending to lead its trainees in an armed rebellion. In the summer of 1907, he and Qiu Jin picked the day his trainees would be graduated to start the rising. During the graduation ceremony on 6 June, Xu Xilin shot the governor and his retinue from a revolver, and set out at the head of his trainees to capture the arsenal. But his small troop of several dozen was routed, Xu Xilin was taken prisoner, and killed. Learning of Xu's ties with Qiu Jin's organisation, the authorities raided her school. On 12 June, Qiu Jin was arrested and summarily executed.

From then on police surveillance in the maritime provinces was redoubled. The authorities attacked and crushed many armed secret society units connected with the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty. Not until November 1908 did any of its members, this time Xiong Chengji, who was commander of an artillery battalion of the Anqing garrison, again try to engineer a revolt against the Manchus. When word reached the city of the death of Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu, he attempted to seize Anqing at the head of his artillery battalion, but the isolated action was quickly put down.

The failure of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty rising in 1907 augmented the general disaffection among Unity League leaders in Tokyo connected with the Promotion of Sovereignty League. They objected to Sun Yatsen's preoccupation with South China. As they saw it, he was neglecting other parts of the country. Besides, they resented his having taken exclusive charge of funds and resources, using them to organise a rising in Guangdong and Guangxi. Differences over the programme, too, grew more acute. Zhang Taiyan, a member of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty, held that at that stage propaganda should be confined to just the most popular and comprehensible demand—overthrow of the Manchus. Tao Chenzhang left Tokyo for Malaya at the end of 1907, and there set up a chapter of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty independent of the Unity League, inviting Zhang Taiyan to be its honorary president.

Though in 1906-1908 all revolutionary actions were defeated and

the all-China revolutionary organisation—the Unity League—lost some strength, its activity helped to lay the ground for revolution. Revolutionaries had gained experience. The seeds of revolutionary propaganda were yielding a rich harvest. The succession of armed actions, despite the setbacks, helped to undermine the pillars of the Manchu regime and to spread revolutionary anti-Manchu sentiment across the country.

Chapter 14

THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS 1908-1911

The crisis that culminated in the revolution of 1911 was nationwide and gripped all sections of Chinese society. The surrender of the Qing government to the imperialist powers and its merciless plunder of the people brought China to the brink of national collapse. Excessive emission of copper coin and banknotes by central and provincial authorities caused runaway inflation, dislocated finance, and upset trade. Currency in circulation tripled in the two years of 1908 and 1909. By 1910 its amount was eight times that of 1905. A wave of bankruptcies swept through the financial and commercial quarters of Shanghai, Nanjing, Hankou, Tianjin, Yinkou, and other cities in 1910 and 1911. In 1910, for example, seventeen large private banks and banking firms failed in Shanghai alone, and as many as twenty-seven the following year.

Inflation, monetary turmoil, spiralling prices, and the declining purchasing power of the mass of the people tended to cripple industrial development. Private investment shrank to less than a third of what it was before the crisis, in 1906-1908.

The masses were in sad straits. This, too, contributed to the emergence of a revolutionary situation. The movement against Qing taxes and various other levies grew to unprecedented proportions. There were food riots, and great turbulence over the disastrously rising price of rice. The Russian minister in Beijing, I. Y. Korostovets, reported to his foreign minister in April 1910: 'In effect, the entire people of China are gripped by a sense of protest against the existing regime and are ready to resort to force at the first suitable opportunity. Nearly everywhere in the country there is ferment against the government in the shape of uprisings, riots, pogroms, and soldiers' mutinies.'¹

China's position in world affairs had also deteriorated. Japanese-American contradictions led to a re-alignment of forces in the Far East. In December 1909, the United States produced its 'neutralisation' plan, providing for the division of railways in the North-Eastern

Provinces among six countries—the U.S.A., Russia, Britain, France, Japan, and Germany. Japan retaliated by concluding a new secret agreement with Russia in July 1910, under which the tsar's government let Japan annex Korea, while Japan promised to facilitate the tsar's thrust into Mongolia.

In August, Japan's annexation of Korea became a *fait accompli*. Japan began turning the country into a springboard for further aggression against China. In 1911, the imperialist powers intensified their expansionist activity: Britain thrust into Pianma in Yunnan province on the border with Burma, the Russian tsar's government presented an ultimatum demanding duty-free trade in Mongolia, and a four-power consortium (Britain, the U.S.A., Germany, and France) 'granted' China the so-called Huguang loan to build the Hubei-Guangdong and Hubei-Sichuan railway.

Towards the close of 1908, a re-alignment of forces occurred within the ruling Manchu elite. In November, Emperor Guangxu, who had been under house arrest since 1898, and Empress Dowager Cixi, stepped off the stage at about the same time. Sensing that her end was near, Cixi issued an order to put her royal nephew to death lest the Hundred Days of Reform should recur after her demise. Enthroned in Guangxu's place was his three-year-old nephew Pu Yi (reign title Xuantong), and the boy's father, Prince Chun (Zai Feng), who was in fact totally dependent on his uncle, Prince Qing (Yi Kuang), was appointed regent. This change strengthened the hand of the extreme reactionary wing of the feudal Manchu nobility.

Following Cixi's death, the reactionary clique of Manchu princes and noblemen set out to elbow away the Chinese feudal bureaucracy and concentrate all military and political power in its own hands. The first step was to dismiss Yuan Shikai, who was then member of the Military Council. On the pretext of his 'ailing feet', Yuan was in effect banished to his native county of Zhangde in Henan province. A Manchu imperial guard was established under the regent's own command. The axe fell also for Yuan Shikai's supporters among the upper echelon of Chinese provincial bureaucrats. In January 1909, the court dismissed Xu Shichang from the office of viceroy of the North-Eastern Provinces and appointed Xi Liang, a Manchu, in his stead. And in July 1909, the Manchu Duan Fang was appointed viceroy of the metropolitan province of Zhili.

In March 1909, the princes Su and Qing, Manchu war minister Tie Liang and Admiral Sa Zhenbing were ordered to start building a new navy. In July, by imperial edict, Prince Chun arrogated the title of supreme commander of China's armed forces. In October 1909 and in March 1910, the regent's brothers—the princes Zai Xun and Zai Tao—were sent to Europe and America at the head of special military missions, and on their return were immediately appointed minister of

the navy and chief of the general staff, respectively.

The Qing elite also aimed to seize control of the finances of the Celestial Empire. In January 1909, a reorganisation of the fiscal system was initiated giving the Manchu government control over all revenue in the country.

In April 1910, a serious conflict erupted between the Qing and the Chinese provincial bureaucracy over the court's attempts to increase the treasury's share of the salt tax. On the pretext of centralising the financial system, a salt administration was set up in Beijing under the ministry of finance headed by Prince Qing. The viceroys and governors of salt-producing provinces and of provinces through which salt was transported were ordered to settle all matters concerning the salt trade with the new administration. True, the Qing did not go so far as to require that the salt tax should go to them in its entirety. The share that local authorities could keep, however, was to be controlled by the salt administration. This provoked resistance of the feudal provincial bureaucracy.

Cumulatively, everything the Qing undertook made their political grip on the country more and more uncertain. By dividing up functions between groups within the ruling elite, they created a certain equilibrium in the government, but this clearly increased its political isolation.

The Qing government's relations with the imperialist powers were also affected. Financially dependent on foreign governments and on foreign banks and monopolies, the ruling elite had no choice but to concede more and more political and economic ground to foreigners, thus injuring the interests of the Chinese national bourgeoisie and the capitalist enterprise of various groups of Chinese landlords. The Qing restricted neither the inflow of foreign capital (chiefly loans, but also direct investments) nor that of foreign commodities.

In 1907, the Imperial Maritime Customs brought in 32.5 million *liang*, which amounted to 25 per cent of the imperial treasury's total revenue. Indeed, the customs accounted for the biggest item in the treasury's income, exceeding even the land tax, which brought in 31 million *liang*. In the first ten years of the 20th century (1901-1910), another 37 cities in 12 provinces of China proper were opened to foreign trade, bringing up the total to as many as 84 open ports. Having exempted foreign-made goods from the *liqin* (octroi), the Qing granted them unrestricted access to inland regions. The absence of protectionist tariffs struck painfully at the rising national bourgeoisie. The Qing autocracy was aiding and abetting international imperialism, while holding down the growth of capitalist production relations in the country.

True, the ruling conservative clique tried to profit from the traditional Chinese doctrine of 'using barbarians to control barbarians',

and to capitalise on the inter-imperialist contradictions that had grown keener on the eve of the First World War with the aim of evading at least some of its diplomatic, economic and other commitments. The purpose behind this was to regain the Qing monopoly on exploiting the people of China. In practice, however, this policy only provoked fresh aggressive imperialist moves and led to China's still more humiliating debasement.

The Qing even tried, albeit timidly, to curtail the extraterritorial rights of foreigners. In 1909 and 1910, when European-style courts of law were set up in the treaty ports, the Qing tried to assume jurisdiction over all foreign nationals. Nationals of countries that had no diplomatic relations with China were stripped of extraterritorial rights altogether. But the diplomatic corps reacted violently to these moves, and they were quickly shelved.

In 1910, following the retirement of Robert Hart, a new Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime Customs had to be appointed in his place. Since the 1860s, China's Maritime Customs had been under British control. The Qing court was too weak to contest this point. Now, in a bid to gain a bigger share of the customs revenue, it took advantage of Hart's retirement: a head administration of imperial maritime customs was established under the Manchu Na Tong to audit accounts and supervise foreign customs inspectors. The *Beijing ribao*, mouthpiece of the Qing foreign ministry, started a campaign that the maritime customs should be made part of the state machinery of the Qing Empire. But a British note of protest made the ruling clique back down at once, and accept Britain's new nominee to the office of Customs Inspector-General. The reorganisation of the customs administration was thus rendered meaningless.

Qing attempts to curtail the military, political, and economic influence of the feudal Chinese compradore groups displeased the foreign powers, notably Britain and the U.S.A. Following Yuan Shikai's dismissal in January 1909, an emergency conference of the diplomatic corps was called in Beijing. Sir John Jordan, the British minister, and W.W. Rockhill, his American colleague, who had specific instructions from their governments, handed the Qing court a strongly-worded protest. After the edict on Yuan Shikai's retirement was issued, he received Jordan's reassurances of safety: the British and American imperialists were not going to abandon their creature to the tender mercies of Emperor Guangxu's brothers, who were likely to seek revenge for Yuan's treachery in 1898.

The ruling Manchu clique naturally chafed against the restraints of this policy of the powers. Its relations with them became strained, making its situation still more difficult in face of the mounting internal crisis, its scope for manoeuvre thus being increasingly restricted.

Spontaneous Actions of the People

All three opposition movements—the opposition of the mass of the people, the bourgeois revolutionary opposition, and the liberal-bourgeois landlords' opposition—were highly active against the reactionary Qing regime in the period from 1908 to 1911.

Rice riots and anti-tax movements kept breaking out in all corners of the country. The natural calamities of 1909 and 1910, which impelled food hoarding and profiteering, and pushed up the price of rice, triggered disorders on an unprecedented scale, especially in the Yangzi valley—the provinces of Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi, and Jiangsu. The biggest of the rice riots occurred in Changsha in 1910.

In the spring of 1910, in Hunan province the price of 1 *dan* of rice was 8,000 *wen*, against 2,000 or 3,000 in other years. Even in 1906, during a crop failure, it had not risen beyond 4,000 *wen*. Meanwhile, owing to the indemnities that had to be paid to foreign powers (700,000 *liang* annually), to the cost of maintaining the New Army (200,000 *liang*), and that of building new roads (over 500,000 *liang*), taxes in Hunan were going up steeply—the food tax threefold, the deeds of purchase tax fourfold, and so on. The flood of 1909 destroyed a large part of the rice fields in the province, causing famine. This aggravated relations between landlords, merchants, and officials, on the one hand, and peasants and urban poor, on the other. Furthermore, with the governor's support Hunan landlords and merchants bought up much of the available rice and shipped it out of the province. And under an agreement they had signed with the governor of Hunan in 1909, foreign firms, too, shipped rice to Hankou and other cities. This exportation of rice from the province precipitated a violent fight between two groups of landlords. Seeking to fill their granaries with cheap rice, the group headed by Kong Xianjiao and backed by Zhuang Gengliang, an official nursing the ambition to oust and replace the governor, demanded that the rice shipments should be stopped and the rice sold in the province at fixed prices.

Meanwhile, the food situation in Hunan kept deteriorating. In Changsha, with average monthly consumption at 800,000 *dan*, the stock of rice went down to 300,000. The price of rice soared. By the end of March, a *dan* of rice was worth 9,000 *wen*. Crowds of hungry peasants streamed into the city. They attacked rice mills, shops and granaries, and landlord estates. On 17 March, governor Cen Chunming had to sign an order banning shipment of rice from the province. But the order was not to go into effect until twenty days after its signing, and landlords and foreign firms wasted no time to ship out as much rice as they could. The food shortages and the rising prices, aggravated by the heartless policy of the local authorities, raised tensions to breaking point.

On 11 April 1910, in the vicinity of Changsha a peasant family committed suicide to escape death from starvation. This proved cause enough for an uprising to flare up. A crowd of some two hundred raided and sacked a mill whose owner set an exorbitant price on rice. The authorities arrested forty 'ring-leaders', among them the carpenter Liu Yongfu. The infuriated crowd broke into the police station and thrashed the chief of police. Then they headed for Changsha, joined *en route* by new protesters, and beleaguered the residence of the provincial governor, demanding release of the prisoners and sale of rice at low prices. Learning of the governor's order to open fire on them, the crowd broke into and ransacked his offices. The frightened governor promised that in five days a *sheng* of rice would be sold at 60 *wen*. But there was no stopping the crowd. In the small hours of the 14th it ransacked some one hundred rice mills, shops, and granaries. At daybreak, a crowd of 20,000 gathered in the streets.

The governor, Cen Chunming, who by then had received orders to subdue the disturbances at once, turned for help to local landlords and *shenshi*. But they decided to use the opportunity and get rid of him. In the meantime, the rebellious crowd attacked Chinese and foreign rice firms, government offices, and missionary schools—the latter because a special tax had been introduced to raise funds for their maintenance. The police were powerless. The horrified governor turned over his office to Zhuang Gengliang, who issued an order lowering the price of rice, while also instructing his subordinates to put down the rebellion.

The 49th regiment of the New Army arrived in Changsha to restore order. Some 3,000 soldiers went into action in the environs of Changsha. Two battalions were despatched to Hunan from Hubei province and Yuezhou prefecture, in addition to twenty naval vessels. Troops in the metropolitan province, too, were made ready for combat.

The imperialist powers, who virtually ordered the Qing to restore order, sent ten of their own gunboats to help the local authorities. The Changsha rising was put down. But the movement spread to other counties in Hunan: Ningxiang, Anhua, Yuezhou, Baoqing, Changde, Lizhou, and Hengzhou. Peasants and urban poor sacked the homes of landlords and *shenshi*, expropriating their food stocks. Newspapers reported that several hundred prosperous houses were attacked in just the counties of Changsha and Shanhua. The rioting was especially severe along the border with Hubei province. In Ningxiang county a unit of Yihetuans from Shandong came into the open, calling on the people to rise against local officials.

The throne appointed a new governor, a man named Yang Wending, and ordered him to show no mercy to the insurgents. Yang

was also required to raise 1 million *liang*, procure 200,000 *dan* of rice, and put them on sale in Changsha at 40 *wen* a *sheng*. The ministry of finance allocated 300,000 *liang* for relief in the province.

The rice riots in Changsha, the biggest and most impressive action of the masses driven to despair, were typical of the popular risings of that time.

Frequently, starving peasants and urban poor were backed up by the *shenshi*, small traders, and small landlords—those, who had no connection with foreign trade. In the spring of 1910, commoners in Nanling county, Anhui province, for example, supported by a group of literati, were able to compel local authorities to forbid shipping rice out of the province despite the objections and boycott of powerful rice merchants. Peasants formed patrols and kept watch on roads and river banks, preventing breaches of the ban, stopping junks carrying food, and checking landlord granaries.

Since the riots were by oppressed and downtrodden peasants and townsmen, many were unavoidably violent. The starving people did not confine themselves to merely confiscating hoarded rice; they destroyed rice mills, sacked rice shops, and the like. Still, some elements of organisation did prevail: the expropriated rice, for example, was distributed fairly, rioters formed special patrols to prevent rice shipment, and so on.

In effect, the popular actions were precipitated by the prevailing feudal exploitation and the mounting fiscal pressures. The government's New Policy involved substantial additional expenditure, the burden of which was shifted to the people. Again and again, in anti-tax actions, rioters demanded repeal of the New Policy or at least stricter control over how it was being carried out. In those years, 1909 to 1911, the anti-tax risings were more violent than at any time before. The 1910 rising in Laiyang county, Shandong province, was a typical action of that period. Mounting taxes, abuses practised by local officials, compounded with the crop failure of 1909, set off an explosion of wrath that was hard to put down. By the spring of 1910, taxes collected in Laiyang totalled ten times those of 1900. The new tax-collecting procedure introduced by the county chief, the pervasive corruption of officials, and supplementary levies of cash for the conduct of the New Policy provoked part of the small landlords and the *shenshi* gentry, as well as the mass of peasants. In early 1910, the local lodge of the legal landlord-peasant organisation Lianzhuanhui (United League of Villages), headed by Qu Shiwen, a *shenshi*, started a propaganda campaign against the New Policy. In spring, Qu's followers called on the peasants to withhold payment of the supplementary head tax and livestock tax. They accused the county chief of misappropriating public rice supplies.

In a proclamation to the people, Qu Shiwen expounded on the

disastrous plight of his countrymen and the adverse consequences of the New Policy that led to higher taxes and whetted the appetites of corrupt officials. In the name of Heaven, he undertook to deliver the people from greedy officials and *shenshi*, and urged everyone to follow him.

Initially, Qu and his supporters among the local literati, small landlords, and prosperous peasants meant to fight the officials by the legal method of petitioning. On 13 April, when a crowd of indignant peasants gathered in the local temple and demanded that public stores of rice should be distributed at once, Qu endeavoured to avoid a riot by locking the temple gates, and took a delegation of thirty to the county seat to negotiate with the officials. But on the following day, some 10,000 peasants marched on the county town, surrounded the administration building, and demanded that officials stop collecting taxes. They also demanded dismissal of unpopular village elders, and wanted officials to be forbidden access to public granaries. Among their other demands was that of banning removal of food, and reducing the tax on theatrical performances. On 15 April, the rebellious peasants were joined by local Buddhist and Taoist monks, who demanded abolition of the tax on temple property and return of money already collected by officials.

Lacking an effective military force, the county chief adopted the tactic of promises and delays. But when the time for paying taxes came in early May, some 8,000 peasants again surrounded the county offices, and ransacked the homes of the more obnoxious officials and *shenshi*. This precipitated attacks on landlords up and down the county. The revolt was joined by 30,000 to 40,000 people. Armed peasants set up a fortified camp in the township of Jiulihe, priming for an assault on Laiyang. The county chief resorted to negotiations. Qu Shiwen and his lieutenant Yu Zhusan presented the old demands, and also insisted that the land tax should be reduced to its 1901 level. Besides, they wanted some of the worst officials to be put to death. The county chief, Zhu Huaizhi, agreed to some of the demands, and the peasants dispersed.

The landlords and *shenshi* who had fled from Laiyang when the peasant disturbances erupted, asked the governor of Shandong to remove Zhu Huaizhi from office. A new county chief was appointed, who repealed Zhu's orders and reintroduced the high taxes. The people's fury burst out anew. The chief reported to the governor: 'The Laiyang population is resisting the New Policy, creating disturbances, and joining up with bandits.'² Government troops were rushed to Laiyang at his request on 22 May. The excesses of the soldiers sent to arrest Qu Shiwen roused the whole county. Some 15,000 armed peasants were poised to attack Laiyang. Merchants and *shenshi*, on the other hand, demanded that the authorities deal

with the rebels firmly. Initially, the Shandong provincial consultative assembly asked the county chief to take no drastic action, and sent five of its members to investigate the situation on the spot. They placed the blame for the disturbances wholly on the Laiyang officials, but during the discussion of their report most members accused Qu Shiwen of forming a party of 'mutineers' and going against the government. Thereupon, the assembly approved the governor's course of action, and recommended 'appropriate measures' to prevent disorders in future.

At the end of May and in early June, peasant detachments carried on their unequal fight against government troops. Despite a few temporary successes (capture of Laiyang), the insurgents were defeated, and surviving detachments withdrew to the neighbouring county of Haiyang, and then to the hills. In Laiyang, blood flowed liberally as the authorities wreaked vengeance on the populace.

The Laiyang rebellion epitomised the people's spontaneous protest against abuses of the authorities and the policy of the central government. It was a revolt against taxes and levies, and an assault on the officialdom. The demand to abolish the New Policy, to check public funds, and the like, which originated with landlords and *shenshi*, gave it a political complexion.

During the period under review, anti-tax movements were intimately linked with the rejection by the masses of the New Policy. The liberal opposition's demand for control over the New Policy, and for abolition of some of the measures taken by the Qing government, was popular throughout the country. The census started by the government was resisted; census-takers were beaten, their records destroyed, schools where the records were kept ransacked or gutted, and the like. Fuel was added to the flames by the secret societies' agitation against the idea of the census and the methods employed (including a special duty paid to cover the cost of the census). Armed clashes broke out over the issue, especially in Jiangsu (Yixing county and Taizhou prefecture) and Guangdong (Lianzhou prefecture). Though most of the actions were short and primitive in form, their magnitude, especially in the southern regions, gravely alarmed the authorities.

The anti-tax movements were massive, and involved people from different walks of life. They were usually initiated by the more prosperous sections of the population—affluent peasants, small landlords, part of the *shenshi* gentry, and traders—for whom the unbearable tax burden, coupled with abuses by officials conducting the New Policy, spelled ruin and disaster. Owing to their economic and social status, however, they were usually eager to keep the movement within legal and orderly bounds, and were quite willing to bargain and come to terms with the officials.

The bulk of the rebels were poor and middle peasants, artisans, and petty traders. They were easily aroused, and were the most active. More often than not, the anti-tax actions were started and led by legal village organisations, notably the village leagues, in which local landlords and *shenshi* held sway. The secret societies, on the other hand, played a much less prominent part, chiefly because their activity had generally lapsed by that time.

On the whole, the period from 1909 to 1911 was marked by a further rise of spontaneous discontent. The number of anti-tax actions tripled as compared with the preceding few years. Rice riots and movements against taxes and the New Policy were prevalent, while anti-foreign actions and anti-missionary revolts were few. Spontaneous anti-foreign sentiment surfaced in only a few of the risings, such as the rice disorders in Changsha.

The Bourgeois Revolutionary Movement Gains Momentum

In 1908 and the next few years the revolutionary movement headed by the Unity League and other organisations continued to grow. The two main revolutionary centres—the Hubei-Hunan centre and the Guangdong centre—gained considerable strength. As before, Sun Yatsen and other Unity League leaders concentrated on setting the stage for revolution, or at least establishing a temporary base for it, in the southern and south-western border provinces of Guangdong, Yunnan, and Guangxi. The fight against the Manchus, they held, had better chances of success there, because it was easier to bring in arms and armed volunteers from across the border, and maintain contact between overseas and local revolutionaries. And as before, the Unity League leaders failed to seek the support of the mass of the people, neglecting systematic agitation and propaganda.

In March 1908, the French authorities ordered Sun Yatsen to leave Hanoi. He moved to Singapore. Huang Xing and Hu Hanmin stayed on in Vietnam, aiming to organise a new rising in the south-western region of Guangdong and the southern counties of Guangxi. On 27 March, Huang Xing and 200 volunteers armed with rifles and pistols crossed the border and launched an action in the Qinzhou (Guangdong)—Shangsi (Guangxi) area. At the end of January 1908, Huang Xing had obtained assurances from the local Chinese commander that his troops would back the rebels and give them arms and ammunition. But at the eleventh hour, the officer went back on his promise. Reinforced by local peasants, the rebel unit, now numbering 600, fought the government troops for forty desperate days and nights, and after using up all its ammunition withdrew to

Vietnam with heavy losses.³

At this time, a rising erupted in Hekou, a border town in Yunnan province. It was headed by Huang Mingtang, elder of the local secret society and member of the Unity League. At the end of April, he and a hundred volunteers had secretly crossed the frontier from Vietnam, recruited several dozen braves from among the local people, established contact with a few officers of the local garrison, and started a rising on 29 April. The first to go over to the side of the revolutionaries were the police, who killed their superiors. Soon, one of the border battalions also joined the rebels. On 1 May, the chief of the Hekou garrison was killed by his officers, and Manchu power in the town was abolished. The insurgents captured 1,000 rifles and 70,000 cartridges. Following the capture of Hekou, Huang Mingtang formed two units to march on Kunming, the provincial capital. Xi Liang, viceroy of Yunnan and Guizhou, rushed in ten battalions to engage the revolutionaries, and bitter fighting erupted in the vicinity of Mengzi.⁴

On learning of the Yunnan rising, Sun Yatsen instructed Huang Xing to go speedily to Hekou. But Huang did not manage to take control of the insurrection. The bulk of the rebellious garrison was against a northerly march. After spending a few days in Hekou, Huang Xing returned to Hanoi, where he asked Hu Hanmin to obtain arms and ammunition, and to form volunteer units to reinforce the Yunnan rising. On 11 May, when on his way back to Hekou, Huang Xing was apprehended by a French border patrol and eventually expelled from Indochina by the colonial authorities.

Lacking firm revolutionary leadership, the rebels let the initiative slip out of their hands, and government forces, which outnumbered them, retook Hekou at the end of May 1908. The uprising was put down. Huang Mingtang succeeded in battling his way to Vietnam at the head of a group of several hundred. They were disarmed by the French colonial authorities. Poor training and isolation of rebel units from each other led to the defeat of the succession of armed actions undertaken by the Unity League in 1908. But despite the setbacks, they had the effect of lowering the prestige of the Qing regime, and provided inspiration for the forward-looking elements to try again.

Marked changes occurred in the tactics of bourgeois revolutionaries. Disappointed in the secret societies, the revolutionary party decided to rely more on those in the newly activated New Army units attracted to the revolution. What the revolutionaries lacked was a clear principle concerning mass struggle. Members of revolutionary organisations did try, on their own initiative, to use spontaneous popular risings to stimulate anti-Qing activity. In 1910, for example, during the rice riots in Changsha, two Hubei revolutionary organisations—the Universal Progress League and the Society for the Study of

Self-Government—thought of backing the popular rising. They were going to send two envoys to Hunan, while Sun Wu was instructed to obtain arms and start an anti-Manchu rebellion. But the plan reached the ears of the authorities, and could not be carried out.⁵ In Hunan, where the Unity League had no branch of its own, a few of its members nevertheless tried to use the favourable situation. Chen Zuoxin, a platoon commander of the New Army's 49th regiment, offered the regimental commander, a member of the Unity League, to go over to the side of the rebellious people of Changsha, but to no avail.

In Anqing, the capital of Anhui province, bourgeois revolutionaries prevailed on units of the New Army to rebel. The rising was to be headed by Xiong Chengji, commander of an artillery battalion, and a member of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty. It was to start in Taihu county on the 18th or 19th of November 1908, during New Army manoeuvres there involving troops from various Yangzi valley provinces. But the governor of Anhui, who knew the troops had been exposed to revolutionary agitation, did not let the Anqing garrison take part in the Taihu manoeuvres. Xiong Chengji and a few other revolutionary officers then decided to start the rising in Anqing at the time of the manoeuvres. The death of the empress dowager on 15 November added to their faith in success, for they expected the court and government to be thrown into confusion. On 19 November, two artillery battalions and a squadron of cavalry left their out-of-town barracks, and headed for Anqing. In the outskirts of the city, they captured a warehouse of cartridges, then tried entering Anqing by the northern gate. But the wary governor had taken precautionary measures. Taking fright, the commander of an infantry unit quartered within the city walls failed to keep his promise to Xiong to open the gate. Xiong ordered his artillery battalion to shell the city, but this yielded no result. After a day and night's vigil beside the city wall, Xiong's unit began to melt away. The governor despatched a strong force and crushed the remainder of the rebels.⁶ Xiong managed to escape to Japan. In January 1910, he secretly came to Harbin, where he attempted to assassinate the regent's brother, Prince Zai Tao, was seized by the police, and executed on 20 February.

The failure of these armed undertakings sharpened the struggle between various groups within the Unity League. Zhang Taiyan and Tao Chengzhang, leaders of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty, redoubled their attacks on Sun Yatsen. Backed by Song Jiaoren, a Unity League leader, they accused Sun of withholding funds from *Minbao*, buying unusable arms abroad, and so on. In fact, however, they, who represented anti-Manchu nationalist Chinese landlords, did not want the Unity League to be headed by a man

who held up the interests of the democratic section of the Chinese bourgeoisie and stood on the party's extreme left. They wanted Sun Yatsen to be replaced by someone of more moderate political views, such as Huang Xing. But their bid failed. In 1909, they reconstituted the board of the League for the Promotion of Sovereignty in Tokyo, and in fact dropped out of the Unity League.

In the spring of 1909, Sun Yatsen set out from Singapore via Europe for the United States to marshal support among Chinese communities and raise funds for the anti-Qing struggle. By the beginning of 1910, he succeeded in establishing Unity League cells in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, and raised nearly 9,000 dollars among Chinese emigrants. The money was spent on preparing the rising in Guangzhou in 1910.

In the summer of 1909, Unity League members Hu Yisheng, Zhao Sheng, and Chen Jiongming, along with others, won supporters among New Army men and officers in Guangzhou, where the garrison consisted of two infantry regiments, two artillery battalions, and a battalion of engineers. In one of the infantry regiments junior officer Ni Yingdian won a considerable part of the complement to the side of the revolution. Revolutionaries were also active among guard troops and among members of Guangdong secret societies.

A Unity League bureau for South China was formed under Hu Hanmin in Hong Kong at the close of 1909. It took the preparations for an uprising in Guangzhou into its own hands, setting it for late February 1910. Zhao Sheng, a former New Army regimental commander in Guangdong was appointed military chief of the planned rising.⁷

On 9 February 1910, a few New Army men of the 1st battalion, 2nd regiment, were arrested by the police. Their indignant mates surrounded the police station and demanded their release. The police authorities were forced to comply. Ni Yingdian left immediately for Hong Kong to consult the Unity League's South China bureau about the situation shaping in Guangzhou. It was decided to start the rising on 15 February. But on the 12th there were more clashes between soldiers and police. The chief of the Guangzhou garrison ordered all gates closed, and sent details of Manchu bannermen to guard them. Ni Yingdian returned from Hong Kong to his unit, quartered in the outskirts of the city, in the morning of 13 February. In the circumstances, it seemed to him that the rising should be started without delay. About a thousand men and junior officers of the New Army's 1st regiment marched on the city. Manchu troops guarding Eastern Gate opened fire, inflicting considerable losses. Ni Yingdian was killed. Left without a leader and failing to get the promised support from Hong Kong, the insurgents called off the attack on the same day, and were dispersed by government troops.⁸

Though, owing to poor organisation and the small number of participants, the rising was subdued before it really got under way, the Qing government was badly frightened. On 15 February 1910, the throne ordered the war ministry to make a close check of the entire army.

For Unity League leaders the rising had been the first large-scale attempt at turning the army against the Manchu monarchy. From then on, the League devoted more and more attention to the armed forces, especially troops of the New Army. Hubei revolutionaries were especially persistent. More than a score of revolutionary organisations, some consisting of just a few members, sprang up in Wuhan on the soil fertilised by the Sunday Knowledge Society that had fallen apart in January 1907.⁹ Later, these became the nucleus of larger associations. In March 1908, a few members of the Sunday Knowledge Society formed the Unity League of the Hubei Army (Hubei jundui tongmenghui). In a few months it numbered some 400 members.¹⁰ In December, for security reasons, the league was renamed Society for the Study of Self-Government.

Initially, the organisations were open to soldiers only. The charter of the Society for the Study of Self-Government, for example, said expressly that no officers were admitted.¹¹ But soon enough the rule was reversed. Gradually, junior officers, too, were allowed to join. The admission fee was 1 *yuan*, and the monthly dues 10 per cent of wages. To be admitted, the applicant had to have three backers to vouch for him. In 1909, the Society for the Study of Self-Government worked underground, but had a newspaper, *Shangwubao*, which was published in Hankou. The editor-in-chief was a revolutionary intellectual, Zhan Dabai, and his associate editor a former sergeant of the 41st regiment, He Haiming. The paper covertly propagated revolutionary ideas, until the Manchu authorities closed it in 1910.

In the spring of 1910, part of the Hubei troops were deployed to Hunan to subdue popular revolts, and the leaders of the society decided to take advantage of the opportunity for starting an armed rebellion in Wuhan. But their preparations were discovered by the authorities, and to evade arrest most of them had to flee.

In August 1910, the organisation was renamed Society for the Study of Military Matters (Zhenwuxueshe). The new charter said, among other things: 'The society has brought together friends from the military milieu. It studies military problems; that is why it is called the Society for the Study of Military Matters.'¹² The new name was meant to mislead military and local authorities. Organisationally, too, the new society was more advanced. 'Trustees' were appointed in regiments, battalions, and companies. They led revolutionary groups in the units and maintained the link between leaders

of the society and the membership. Under the charter, every revolutionary was expected to recommend at least two new members every month. This helped to consolidate the organisation. By the autumn of 1910, its revolutionary propaganda began reaching a fairly large segment of soldiers, and naturally came to the notice of senior officers. The commander of the 21st brigade, Li Yuanhong, dismissed a company commander whom he discovered to be a leader of the society. A few other active revolutionaries faced arrest, and were compelled to quit the army and leave Hubei. By the end of the year, the society was crippled. Those of its leaders who stayed on in Wuhan, decided to change its name once more, this time to Literary Society (Wenxueshe). The inaugural meeting was held on 30 January 1911. A soldier of the 41st regiment, Jiang Yiwu, a member of the Unity League, was elected to the leadership; so was Sergeant Wang Xianzhang.¹³

The Literary Society was highly active, and had members in nearly every local New Army unit. It propagated the idea of overthrowing Manchu rule and restoring national equality. But it had no comprehensive programme.

The Universal Progress League, formed in Tokyo in 1907, was also doing good revolutionary work in Hubei province. By the end of 1908, most of the natives of Hubei and Hunan had returned from Japan to start on the revolutionary programme they had adopted in Tokyo. A headquarters was set up in Hankou, and liaison centres in Changsha and Yichang. They devoted themselves to uniting the various secret societies in the two provinces, and to activating anti-Manchu detachments. But they were occupied with winning over elders of secret societies, who were chiefly anti-Manchu landlords and *shenshi*, rather than the rank and file. Their many attempts to organise a rising failed. And in the spring of 1910, their activity was altogether paralysed by the authorities. In the autumn, prominent leaders of the League, Liu Gong and Yang Shijie, arrived from Japan with the League's programme documents and quantities of revolutionary literature.¹⁴

Their failure to marshal secret societies for an anti-Manchu revolution made the leaders of the Universal Progress League turn to the army, where the Literary Society and its precursors had already launched extensive underground activity. By the close of 1910, members of the Universal Progress League had joined in the extensive revolutionary work among New Army units in Hubei, and by the spring of 1911 their progress was quite substantial.

The two organisations—the Universal Progress League and the Literary Society—acted independently of each other, and of the Unity League. No contacts existed between them until the spring of 1911. Only a few Unity League members in Hubei joined the local

revolutionary organisations, chiefly on their own initiative.

In some of the counties of Hubei province, notably Jingzhou, clandestine anti-Manchu activity was conducted by a chapter of the Republican League (Gonghehui), initially an affiliate of the Unity League in Zhili province. It consisted of revolutionary literati, mainly teachers, students, and trainees of various Baoding and Tianjin academies. In the winter of 1910, the League was joined by a few dozen students of the Baoding Agricultural College, who gave it its name and initiated changes in its programme. The new points inserted in the programme were: overthrow of the Manchu autocracy, establishment of a republic, abolition of national and racial privileges, and development of modern industry. Leaders of the Republican League omitted the key principle of the Unity League's platform—equalisation of land rights—and replaced it with a call to abolish national and racial privileges. Through the adoption of its new programme, the Republican League turned in substance from a branch of the Unity League into an independent political organisation.

Unlike other revolutionary organisations in Hubei, the Republican League did nothing to enlist the support of the army or of secret societies, and contributed nothing of substance to the preparations for revolution.

Small revolutionary groups existed in the Northern and North-Eastern provinces (Zhili, Fengtian, etc.)—the Iron and Blood Society (Tiexuehui), the Radical Society (Jijinhui), and others. They were not associated with the Unity League, and operated on their own. Their platform boiled down to the one goal of overthrowing Manchu rule.

In short, the many anti-Manchu revolutionary organisations and groups that existed in China on the eve of the revolution, with different names and different programmes, were loosely or not at all connected with one another. And the Unity League, though professing to be an all-China political party, did not, in effect, succeed in being a centre that united and co-ordinated their activity, or an immediate leader of the entire revolutionary movement.

After the suppression of the Guangzhou rising in February 1910, the leaders of the Unity League faced the question of where to prepare the next rebellion. Some leaders, who drew lessons from the defeat in Guangzhou, held that the centre of gravity should be shifted to the Yangzi valley. Their viewpoint was approved at a conference of leaders of eleven provincial Unity League branches held in Tokyo in May 1910, attended, among others, by Song Jiaoren and Tan Renfeng. To co-ordinate and stimulate the revolutionary movement in Central China, the conference resolved to establish a Central China Committee of the Unity League, though its

decision to do so was not implemented until two months before the Xinhai revolution began.

While laying the main emphasis on organising armed risings, the Unity League leadership continued its extensive propaganda. In February 1910, on Sun Yatsen's instructions, Hu Hanmin and Wang Jingwei renewed publication of the journal *Minbao* in Tokyo, and put out two issues—No. 25 and No. 26. As before, the journal attacked the foreign and home policies of the Qing government, its constitutional manoeuvres, the self-interest of the liberal constitutionalists, and called on the people of China to rise and overthrow the Manchus. Issue No. 25 of *Minbao* contained an article about the revolutions in Turkey and Persia. The writer, using the pen-name Min Yi, wrote: 'The revolutionary current flows from West to East. The Turkish revolution was followed by the victory of the revolution in Persia. Ours is the only country that still lies in darkness. Far from prompting us to fight, foreign aggression is being used by some people as a pretext to renounce struggle. Is it not a shame to sit on one's hands, when the motherland is in deadly peril, and watch how other countries rise and revive?'¹⁵ Min Yi pointed out the role played by the army in the Turkish revolution, and called on the Chinese army to do its sacred duty and rise against the tyranny of aliens in defence of its people. He urged Chinese servicemen to follow the example of Xu Xilin rather than Yuan Shikai, 'whose acts of treachery are a terrible disgrace for the army and have tainted its honour'.

The two issues of *Minbao* carried instalments of Wang Jingwei's article, 'Of the Revolutionary Tendency', in which he examined the government's constitutional bills, and concluded that the Manchus' constitutional manoeuvres would not inhibit but, on the contrary, spur the development of the revolution.¹⁶ Wang took to task the liberal *shenshi*, who represented the bulk of the supporters of constitutional monarchy, for taking part in the anti-people constitutional farce.

Though he attacked the constitutional manoeuvres of the government and the posture of liberals, Wang offered no specific programme of revolutionary struggle, and merely maintained that revolution was made by dauntless knights, by hero loners inspired by compassion. Eventually, this provided a theoretical foundation for his concept of individual terrorism. Soon after the article was published, Wang Jingwei defied Sun Yatsen's objections and returned secretly to China, where, in April 1910, jointly with Huang Fusheng, he made an abortive attempt on the regent's life in Beijing. The two were arrested and thrown into gaol. The terrorism of Wang Jingwei and his associates was, in effect, wholly counter-productive, because it tended to distract revolutionaries from the main job of organising

the mass of the people for revolutionary action.

In the autumn of 1910, Sun Yatsen called a conference of Unity League leaders to discuss plans of a new rising in Guangzhou. The conference opened on 13 November on Penang island in Malaya. In addition to Sun Yatsen, Huang Xing, Zhao Sheng, and Hu Hanmin, the conference was attended by delegates of provincial Unity League chapters from South-East China. Units of the New Army quartered in Guangzhou, they agreed, were to be the backbone of the rising. The rising was to be started by a special group of volunteers formed of Unity League members in China or abroad. This unit of 500 to 800 men armed with rifles, pistols, and hand-grenades would infiltrate the city clandestinely the day before the rising.¹⁷ Preparations for the insurrection were delegated to Huang Xing, Zhao Sheng, and Hu Hanmin. The conference gave precedence to fund-raising among overseas Chinese, for there would be arms purchases and other expenses. So, Huang Xing was despatched to Burma, Hu Hanmin to Singapore, and Sun Yatsen to the United States. In quick time, the revolutionaries raised nearly 100,000 *yuan*, with the bulk of this sum coming from Chinese living in South-East Asian countries.¹⁸

On 18 January 1911, travelling from Singapore, Huang Xing arrived in Hong Kong, where he set up the headquarters that would direct the rising. Zhao Sheng, who had intimate ties with army units stationed in Guangdong, was appointed commander of the insurgent armed forces. Liaison with the army was in the hands of Yao Yuping, and Chen Jiongming was made responsible for ties with secret societies. It was in the books that after capturing Guangzhou, the rebel army would march in two columns on Beijing. One column, under Huang Xing, would advance across Hunan and Hubei, and the other, under Zhao Sheng, would pass through Nanjing.

Tan Renfeng, a close collaborator of Huang Xing's, came to Hankou in February 1911 to establish ties with local revolutionary organisations. He met leaders of the Literary Society and Universal Progress League, and obtained promises of support. True, they insisted that Wuhan was a more suitable centre for the revolutionary movement, and that the revolution should begin in that city rather than Guangzhou. But Tan Renfeng turned down the Hubei revolutionaries' offer. When leaving, he contributed 800 *yuan* to their kitty. After his departure, the literary Society and Universal Progress League increased their activity. If the Guangzhou action were successful, the Hubei revolutionaries' support could, indeed, help to spread the revolution to the rest of China.

The Guangzhou rising had originally been planned for 13 April 1911, but though the day approached arms purchased in Japan and Singapore had not yet arrived in Hong Kong. The date was therefore moved to 26 April. On the 8th, however, Wen Shengcai, a revolu-

tionary terrorist, on his own initiative assassinated the Manchu commanding general, Fu Qi. The authorities declared a state of emergency. Zhang Mingqi, viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, took vigorous action, rushing in several guard battalions, while New Army troops had to turn in their cartridges and swords. Ships arriving from abroad were carefully searched.

By mid-April, several groups of Unity League volunteers had already reached Guangzhou. Huang Xing arrived on 23 April. That day he endorsed a plan providing for the capture of key strategic points in the city. But the rising could not start, because a traitor had betrayed the time and plan of action to the police. In the morning of 27 April, Viceroy Zhang Mingqi ordered all city gates locked, and carried out wholesale searches. The revolutionaries were in difficulties, because approximately half the Unity League's volunteer unit had not yet left Hong Kong, while the volunteers in Guangzhou were short of arms. All the same, Huang Xing issued the order to launch the rising in the evening of the 27th. He counted on the support of the guard troops, among whom were many revolutionaries.

At the head of a hundred daring men, Huang attacked and captured the residence of the imperial viceroy. The viceroy and his retinue fled. But at that moment, a fresh unit of government troops reached the residence, and a gory battle broke out, with the insurgents suffering heavy losses. Huang Xing was wounded in the arm. Meanwhile, the other Unity League groups lay low, and Huang's tiny detachment carried on the fight alone against a vastly superior government force. By midnight it was thoroughly licked. Huang concealed himself in the home of a secret sympathiser, and a few days later escaped to Hong Kong.¹⁹

One more anti-Manchu Unity League rising had ended in dismal failure. And for the same reasons as before. It had no mass backing in the army or among the masses, and was of a purely political nature. Unity League leaders were still reluctant to appeal to the people of Guangzhou, while their activity in the army was chiefly confined to contacts with a few officers. The revolutionaries still held the view that once a shock force of volunteers started a rebellion, government troops would automatically take its side.

In sum, however, despite its failure, the Guangzhou rising of 1911 was of relevance for the further course of the revolutionary struggle. Again, Unity League leaders posed the question of where to start an uprising next. Huang Xing still thought Guangzhou should be the chief base of the revolution. But Song Jiaoren, Chen Qimei, and Tan Renfeng decided the time was ripe for setting up a Central China bureau of the Unity League to launch a rising in the Yangzi provinces, put up a revolutionary government there, and thereupon organise a march North. The bureau was established in Shanghai on

31 July 1911, its manifesto stressing the absence of unity within the Unity League and the loose connections between its members. It censured Zhang Taiyan and Tao Chengzhang for their dissent and their disruptive activity, and the South China bureau for its pessimism since the failure of the Guangzhou rising.²⁰

The Shanghai bureau resolved to co-ordinate the efforts of revolutionaries in Central China, and to prepare the ground for another rising. Its manifesto forbade local committees or organisations to launch armed struggles on their own, without permission of the Shanghai centre. The bureau recognised the governing board of the Unity League in Tokyo as the chief body of leadership, while all Unity League branches were in its view associated organisations.²¹

The Central China bureau had a newspaper, *Minlibao*, launched in March 1911 in Shanghai's International Settlement. Articles by Song Jiaoren and other Unity League leaders examined the international situation, exposed the policy of the Qing government and the activity of constitutionalists, and discussed revolution and, notably, the tactics of revolution.

In the spring and summer of 1911 Song Jiaoren was engrossed in drawing up the blueprints for central and local revolutionary bodies of government, and drafted a constitution of the Republic of China, which later served as a prototype for the Provisional Constitution of 1912.²²

Leaders of the Hubei-Hunan revolutionaries had drawn important lessons from the defeat of the Guangzhou rising even before the establishment of the Unity League's Central China bureau in Shanghai. On 3 May 1911, a conference of Universal Progress League leaders adopted a resolution naming Hubei and Hunan 'the chief centres of the Chinese revolution'. It was resolved, too, that if Hubei province were the first to rise, Hunan should render it immediate support, and vice versa. A resolution was also passed to negotiate with the Literary Society and achieve united action.²³

The initiative shifted conclusively to the Hubei revolutionary organisations. Unlike the Unity League, the Hubei revolutionaries worked painstakingly among the troops and in intellectual circles, gradually winning the support of a large section of servicemen, and establishing fruitful contacts with revolutionary elements in neighbouring Hunan province. When a revolutionary situation arose in the autumn of 1911, this proved enough to launch a victorious rebellion against the thoroughly decayed regime of the Qing dynasty.

Activity of the Liberal Bourgeois-Landlord Opposition

On the eve of the revolution, the liberal bourgeois-landlord opposition sought desperately for a constitutional compromise with the

ruling elite to end the crisis gripping the country. It insisted on realisation of moderate bourgeois reforms, which took on an anti-Qing complexion as the ruling Manchu clique buttressed its positions. Concurrently, the liberal opposition sought closer ties with Chinese militarist and bureaucratic elements.

The empress dowager's death and the coming to power of regent Prince Chun bred illusions among bourgeois landlords. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who were still residing abroad, strained to establish contacts with China's new rulers. They sought to profit from the misgivings that some members of the Manchu clique entertained in respect to Yuan Shikai, fearing he would make a bid for power now that Cixi and Guangxu were out of the way. They worked for his removal for they thought he would again obstruct reform. They pleaded with the regent to follow in Guangxu's footsteps and to institute a policy of reform. In late 1908 and early 1909, Kang and Liang addressed a series of messages to the court, advising the regent to publish an appeal to the people and the foreign powers, and set forth a programme of reforms.

Initially, the government of Prince Chun was inclined to keep alive the constitutional illusions of the Chinese liberals. In one of its early edicts, it said that 'establishment of a constitutional system in China is one of the most important tasks the government faces' and called on the people 'to direct all efforts to carrying out this matter to the best advantage'.²⁴

In December 1908, another imperial edict reaffirmed the government's determination 'to carry through all planned constitutional measures and to convene a parliament in the 8th year of the reign of Xuantong (i.e. in 1916-Tr)'.²⁵ In February 1909, local authorities were instructed by imperial edict to organise elections to provincial consultative assemblies. Finally, a special prescript issued in March 1909 under the title, 'Instruction to Censors', stated again that the government was determined 'to implement all reforms that served as stepping stones to the adoption of a constitution'.²⁶

But the constitutionalists' hopes did not materialise. None of the leaders of the liberal opposition was included in the government. Neither Kang Youwei nor Liang Qichao were amnestied. Nor would the regent heed the many appeals to reduce the nine-year term set for 'the introduction of the constitution'.

The new phase of the movement for constitutional monarchy was highlighted by the activity of the provincial consultative assemblies. The liberal opposition set out to constitute local organs of power that would, while keeping intact the Qing monarchy, promote the interests of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and liberal landlords, give them freedom of enterprise and some political freedom as well, and protect them from the arbitrary practices of

Qing officials. As liberals saw it, the consultative assemblies instituted in 1909 would to some extent restrict the heretofore uncontrolled power of Manchu and Chinese viceroys and governors, and pave the way for a constitutional regime and passage of power into the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie and landlords.

The consultative assemblies had been promised by an imperial edict of October 1907. But it was not until 18 months later, in March 1909, that the Qing finally ordered provincial authorities to hold elections to the assemblies in line with the rigid procedures provided for in the election law. The assemblies were first convened in October 1909.

The charter of the provincial consultative assemblies, published in July 1908, named the number of deputies to be elected in each province. Altogether, there were to be 1,677 deputies from the 23 provinces, though in fact fewer attended the first session in October 1909, because elections in Xinjiang had been cancelled.

The number of deputies from each province depended not on the size of the constituency, but on the magnitude of the annual rice levy delivered by the province concerned to the capital (one deputy being 'worth' 30,000 *dan* of rice) or on the total number of licentiates with the *xiuca* degree (5 per cent of that number being the number of deputies the province could elect). Eightbanner troops were entitled to send deputies over and above the quota, this move having been devised by the Qing to ensure an edge in the assemblies for the conservative wing.

Eligible to the assemblies were none but people with the academic degree of *xiuca* and higher, or with papers certifying that they had finished an educational establishment in China or abroad, or had formerly occupied an official position of at least the 7th class (demotion or dismissal disqualified the candidate), or were employed in a teaching position, or owned property worth at least 5,000 *yuan*. This latter qualification allowed merchants and industrialists to aspire to seats in the consultative assemblies. Only natives of the province, of the male sex and at least 25 years of age, could take part in elections. Special clauses of the election law disfranchised students, persons with a record of 'reprehensible behaviour or inclined to violence', 'persons of dubious origin', and the like.²⁷

The elections were held in two rounds. At first, prefectures and counties appointed what were called electors, who thereupon gathered in the prefectural capital to elect assembly members from their own midst. As a result, no more than two million people or about 0.3 per cent of the country's population took part in the elections.

The bulk of deputies to provincial assemblies were of *shenshi* background. They were examination licentiates, former officials, schoolteachers, aspirants to official office, and so on. Some of the

deputies, namely landed proprietors and bureaucrats, had already launched into private enterprise. This bourgeoisified group of *shenshi* was a close ally of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and, like the latter, was intimately associated with the feudal political apparatus.

The activity of provincial consultative assemblies showed that the 'constitutional conflict' had its roots in the economic and political contradictions obtaining between the Qing government and the liberal bourgeois-landlord opposition. The latter's disapproval of the throne's reactionary policies and the privileges granted to foreigners was reflected in the demands put forward by the assemblies. They wanted the government to moderate its tax policy, to carry out monetary reforms, to encourage industry and agriculture.

The debates that flared up in the assemblies brought to light a staggering record of official abuses, embezzlements, and bribery. They revealed the pernicious effects of residual feudal practices that held down economic growth. Assembly deputies tried to secure elimination of some of the obstacles to capitalist enterprise, but were careful to leave intact the chief pillar of the Qing regime: feudal property in land.

Few were the assemblies that did not demand abolition of the *liqin* or that failed to seek improvement of the tax system to make it impervious to the abuses of local authorities. Few, too, were the assemblies that did not demand allocation of part of the tax revenue (particularly the sums earmarked to pay indemnities or repay foreign loans) to cover the needs of local self-government, and so on.

The monetary reform proposals called for an end to excessive emission of copper coin and paper money, for a single system of weights and measures, and for an expansion of banking. 'Most of the consultative assemblies,' wrote Korostovets, the Russian minister in Beijing, in a report, in January 1910, 'noted the need for putting finances in order and ending the country's financial dependence on foreigners.'²⁸

In all provinces, consultative assemblies also drew up recommendations to stimulate local industries and crafts; they called for the establishment of societies that would encourage crop farming and tilling of idle land, and the like. The Fujian consultative assembly, for example, drew up a programme for the development of mining, updating farm techniques, advancing forestry, and promoting tea production. Some assemblies urged improvements in the system of river and canal navigation, construction of railways, and expansion of the educational system of school and university level.

Working through consultative assemblies, the liberal bourgeoisie and landlords endeavoured to restrict the penetration of foreign capital into China, and thereby gain greater scope for their own

enterprise. They demanded higher customs tariffs for foreign goods, limitation of foreign trade to just the treaty ports, a ban on foreigners' buying real estate outside the foreign settlements, restrictions on the activity of foreign missionaries and on foreign exploitation of Chinese mineral wealth, and so on.

The establishment of consultative assemblies did, indeed, bring about visible changes in the alignment of class forces. They helped consolidate the movement for constitutional monarchy, and enabled the bourgeois landlord opposition to exercise greater pressure on the Qing court. Their activity aggravated the conflict between the liberal bourgeoisie and the Manchu government.

The Qing wanted the assemblies to be a mere showpiece and appendage of the monarchic regime. They were not to encroach on the omnipotence of the ruling clique. The Manchu court demanded that the assemblies confine themselves to 'safeguarding the established order and not transcend the limits of their competence; laws of the state and measures not endorsed by the supreme power are in no way subject to their consideration'.²⁹

The assemblies' attempts to breach the restrictions of the Qing and impose their own resolutions on the local officialdom, or to assume control of certain areas of local self-government, encountered unyielding and angry official resistance. The liberal opposition's plans of shaping the consultative assemblies into organs of local power thus ended in failure.

In the circumstances, the earliest convocation of a parliament and establishment of a responsible government gained special urgency in the eyes of constitutionalist leaders. Liang Qichao wrote, 'if the political course now being followed remains unchanged and no attempt is made to alter it, the state will perish before the nine-year period of preparing the constitution expires.'

Merchants and industrialists in Jiangsu and Zhejiang initiated a petition movement. In November 1909, Zhang Jian, chairman of the Jiangsu consultative assembly, suggested forming an all-China council of provincial consultative assemblies and approaching the regent with a collective petition to reduce the nine-year term of preparing the constitution, convene parliament at an earlier date, and constitute a responsible cabinet.

Zhang Jian's proposal elicited an enthusiastic response in the constitutionalist camp. In December 1909, representatives of 16 provincial consultative assemblies conferred in Shanghai and resolved to send a delegation to Beijing with a collective petition asking the government to convene parliament in 1911. Merchants and industrialists rendered the idea all-out support, and timed their own convention of commercial and industrial corporations in Shanghai to coincide with the conference of assembly representatives in order to

work out joint decisions.

A consultative assembly delegation headed by Sun Hongyi chairman of the Zhili assembly, arrived in Beijing in January 1910, and started on a busy schedule. In the metropolitan press and at meetings in the clubs of various provincial associations, constitutionalists argued for the earliest convocation of parliament and establishment of a responsible government. Delegates called on members of the Military Council, and pleaded with them to sway the regent in their favour.

The constitutionalist vogue spread to a considerable section of the petty bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Students and *shenshi* inflicted wounds upon themselves and wrote petitions to the regent in their own blood, pleading for a constitution. The first petition handed to the government in January 1910 on behalf of the consultative assemblies endeavoured to show the regent the advantages of constitutional monarchy and to prove the benefits the Qing dynasty would derive from the parliamentary system of rule. It pointed to 'the sporadic nature of measures taken by a government that has no parliament to lean upon'. It called attention to the catastrophic state of the country's finances. It produced a sombre picture of China's foreign affairs, levelling veiled criticism at the defeatist foreign policy of the Qing government, and traced the deep-going national crisis following 1901 to the inertia of the Qing government and its ignorance of foreign matters.³⁰

But the Manchu clique had no intention of sharing power with members of the liberal opposition. The regent turned down the petition, saying that 'immediate convocation of a parliament would bring about turmoil and disorder, which would impede further constitutional reforms'.³¹ The assembly delegates in Beijing sent a special appeal to the consultative assemblies, calling on organisations, merchants, the gentry, and other social groups to launch a massive supporting petition campaign. The Society for the Earliest Convocation of Parliament (*Guohui qichenghui*) and later the Society of Confederates Fighting for the Convocation of Parliament (*Guohui qingyuan tongzhihui*) were formed in February 1910 to direct the petition movement in Beijing. As conceived by its organisers, the Society of Confederates was to be the nucleus of a future constitutionalist party. Membership in it was open to anyone agreeing with the idea of an early parliament. Its manifesto said that it was formed to propagate 'parliamentary ideas among the broadest possible strata of people' and to assist 'the earliest possible opening of parliament in China'.³² In a 'communication concerning agitation in the provinces,' the society provided for the establishment of provincial branches, and for agitators and lecturers from Zhili, Jiangsu, and Guangdong going to all provinces to promote the peti-

tion campaign, to organise meetings, to lecture, and to publish daily vernacular newspapers with popular explanations of various constitutional problems.

The liberal bourgeoisie saw the way to expanding the constitutional movement in spurring to action bourgeois landlord elements, and in winning the support of the petty bourgeoisie and even the commoners. This was a distinct change of course as compared with the reform movement of the late 19th century. Indeed, the bourgeois and landlord opposition had learned its lessons from the defeat of the early reformers. Its slogan of responsible government fixed attention of reorganising the top echelon of power, and setting up a government in which members of the liberal camp would have some say. Propagation of this slogan, coupled with criticism of current policy, was objectively useful as part of the general clamour for change.

By its activity in consultative assemblies and by its petition campaigns, the liberal opposition showed that its ideas of constitutional monarchy differed drastically from the government's concept of a 'constitutional' Qing Empire. The bourgeois and landlord opposition wanted the constitution to be the political framework of its own rule or, at least, the framework giving it a share of power along with that of feudalists and compradores. For the ruling Manchu-Chinese elite, however, constitutionalism was purely political camouflage, giving the bourgeoisie the illusion of sharing power, while real power remained whole in the hands of the Manchu court, the Chinese feudalists, and the compradores.

The second petition campaign began in February and ended in June 1910. During this period, the constitutionalists made the most of the consultative assemblies to build up the scale of the petition movement. Propaganda in the press, the founding of branches of the Society of Confederates, and leaflets, proclamations, and pamphlets setting forth the platform of the constitutionalists, were all directed to creating a political climate in which petitions would carry more weight with the Qing elite.

On 16 June 1910, leaders of the constitutionalist delegation delivered to the Censorate for transmission to the regent ten petitions that insistently called for the earliest introduction of a constitution and the convocation of a parliament in 1911. The petitions were critical of the regent's January edict that had turned down the first petition, and warned that any further procrastination would lead to disorders and risings, and to the country's total collapse.

The Qing government replied in an imperial edict on 27 June that 'the approach to a constitution must necessarily be gradual', and reiterated its intention of convening parliament in the 8th year of

Xuantong (1916).³³ The reaction of the throne, as we see, was the same as to the first petition. What was more, the imperial edict forbade any further submission of petitions to the Censorate.

The out-of-hand refusal to consider the demands contained in the second petition provoked a sharp riposte from Liang Qichao in his article, 'No Excusing the Government for Obstructing the Convocation of Parliament'. In his 'Address to My Countrymen Concerning the Time for the Convocation of Parliament', he again censured the Qing for their handling of the constitutional issue. 'In recent years,' he wrote, 'under the guise of preparing for the constitution, the government conducted a policy of centralising power which in form seemed to accord with constitutional changes but was in substance the very opposite.'³⁴

In July and August 1910, unimpeded by local authorities, the constitutionalists defied the government ban and launched a new petition campaign in the provinces. A new daily, *Guomin gongbao*, was started in Beijing. It had a large circulation and was distributed in the provinces through the consultative assemblies. The constitutionalists concentrated on winning more supporters, and were planning to build a 'political army'. A conference of consultative assembly delegates in Beijing passed a special resolution to summon merchants and industrialists, and also peasants and workers, to more vigorous action.

Proclamations in the liberal press, and often also handbills and stickers pasted on walls in towns and suburbs, urged the populace to join the Society of Confederates and back up the constitutionalist movement. The rules of the Society's provincial branches were modelled to attract the greatest possible number of supporters. Anyone who declared his sympathy for the constitutionalist platform could be a member.

The third petition campaign coincided in time with a severe deterioration in China's foreign relations. The Russo-Japanese agreement and Japan's annexation of Korea augmented the danger of Manchuria's territorial division. The bourgeois and landlord opposition reacted with still more vigorous calls for the earliest possible convocation of a parliament, lest the tragedy that befell Korea, that 'extinct state', should spread to China. In August 1910, Sun Hongyi, a constitutionalist leader, made public an appeal warning that the people of China were in mortal danger and calling on them 'to join forces and act in the country's defence'.³⁵ He urged them, however, to keep within the bounds of a petition campaign, and expressed hope of obtaining support from 'friendly powers'.

During this period, the constitutionalists had the sympathy of the provincial Chinese bureaucracy, which looked askance at the regent's measures in the realms of finance and military affairs. In September

and October 1910, Chinese viceroys and governors addressed a set of collective petitions and telegrams to the Manchu government, in which they asked for the earliest possible opening of parliament and establishment of a responsible cabinet. They expressed alarm over the rising revolutionary ferment in the country and urged the Qing to neutralise the opposition of bourgeois-landlord elements. 'If these people are drawn into the country's administration,' said a collective memorial of viceroys, 'they will stop fighting against the government and, on the contrary, will assist in its work.'³⁶

This support from top provincial officials greatly stimulated the leaders of the movement for a constitutional monarchy. In October 1910, representatives of provincial consultative assemblies gathered in Beijing and tendered a third petition to the Censorate, again insisting that parliament should be convened in 1911 and that a responsible government should be set up. The petition reflected the mounting alarm felt by the bourgeois-landlord opposition over China's deteriorating position on the world scene and the increasing revolutionary sentiment in the country.

At the same time, the liberal opposition made use of the rostrum of the National Consultative Assembly inaugurated in October 1910 to express its pique over the government's current policies. The government's ruse of occupying the National Assembly exclusively with secondary issues, provoked deputies representing various provincial consultative assemblies to vigorous rebuttals. After a series of stormy debates, the Assembly resolved to support the third petition calling for a parliament and responsible government.

To dampen the opposition of the liberal camp in the setting of revolutionary crisis, the Qing government was compelled to concede some ground: an imperial edict of 4 November 1910 contained the promise of opening parliament in the 5th year of Xuantong (1913). As a preliminary measure, the edict provided for 'elaboration and introduction of new regulations concerning officials, and formation of a cabinet of ministers by way of an experiment'.³⁷ The throne intended to form a responsible cabinet of Manchu princes which would, in effect, stand above the future parliament.

Following the edict of 4 November 1910, the Qing felt that, having made that maximal concession to the liberal opposition, it was free to act and stop the petition movement. In the latter half of December, the police was ordered to arrest representatives of the North-Eastern provinces, who had come to Beijing to submit a petition to the Censorate, and to expel them from the capital. Viceroys and governors were instructed to warn consultative assemblies against sending any more delegates to Beijing. Offenders were to be arrested and strictly punished. In January 1911, Wen Shilin, organiser of the petition campaign in Tianjin, was seized and banished to Xinjiang.

Step by step, the Qing managed to stem the tide and tie the hands of the more active constitutionalists. But in the final analysis, this hard-headed course alienated the liberal opposition and wrapped the Qing government into still tighter political isolation.

Abiding by its 'constitutional' programme, the throne published an edict in May 1911, establishing a cabinet of ministers. The Military Council and the Imperial Chancery (Grand Secretariat) were abolished. The new cabinet consisted largely of Manchus belonging to the imperial family. Out of its thirteen members, eight were Manchus, five of whom were princes. Prince Qing, ex-chairman of the Military Council, was put at the head of the cabinet, with all key ministries—those of finance, war, naval affairs, agriculture, industry and commerce, internal affairs, and so on—also in Manchu hands. Though the foreign ministry was headed by a Chinese, its 'director-general' was the same Prince Qing. Chinese were 'granted' the ministries of education and of posts and communications. The Court of State Ceremonial and the Board of Civil Office, which governed and directed the civil service, were abolished.

The regulations governing the cabinet of ministers said nothing of its responsibility to the future parliament. They prescribed instead that the chairman of the cabinet 'shall follow the guidelines of the supreme power', that is, the emperor. The regulations granted the chairman of the cabinet the right to supervise the top provincial authorities (viceroys and governors), to revoke their orders, and so on.

In parallel with the cabinet of ministers, the Qing established a 32-man Supreme Privy Council (Bideyuan), which replaced the abolished Military Council. It took in all the leaders of the conservative Manchu clique and became the last retreat and bulwark of monarchic reaction.

Thereby the secret plans of the ruling Manchu clique to concentrate all military and economic power in its own hands were revealed for all the world to see.

The establishment of the new cabinet of ministers, consisting chiefly of Manchu princes, provoked disgruntlement up and down the country. In June 1911, representatives of the provincial consultative assemblies, headed by Tan Yankai, chairman of the Hunan assembly, gathered in Beijing. Twice, they sent collective petitions to the Censorate demanding that the cabinet be restructured and that no members of the imperial family should be appointed to it. The petitions pointed out that the post of chairman of the cabinet should never have been given to any relative of the emperor. But, as before, the Qing clique paid no attention. An imperial edict of 5 July 1911 publicly 'rebuked' the petitioners for going against the 'substance' of constitutional monarchy. 'Officials and people,' it said, 'must strictly submit to the general provisions of constitutional law as approved by

the emperor, and 'must abstain from ill-considered petitions, which encroach on the prerogatives of the monarch.'³⁸ The behaviour of the Qing elite in face of the mounting revolutionary crisis naturally affected the posture of the liberal camp.

In the summer of 1911, the liberal opposition made an all-out effort to unite its ranks across the country. The first attempt to do so was made in December 1910, when the Society of Confederates was restructured into the United Imperial Party (*Diguo tongyidang*). In June, when a second joint delegation of consultative assemblies was being fitted out, there sprang up the Society of Friends of the Constitution (*Xianyouhui*) whose platform contained the following planks: consolidation of constitutional monarchy in China; establishment of a cabinet of ministers responsible to parliament; improvement of provincial government; development of the public economy; suiting foreign policy to national needs; raising the standard of military training.

The liberals decided to stop petitioning and to strengthen their political influence in the provinces under guise of 'preparing' for future elections to parliament. This organisational consolidation on a single political platform, coupled with the constitutionalists' political apparatus (provincial consultative assemblies, constitutional societies, and the like), did indeed give the bourgeois-landlord opposition considerable strength on the eve of the Xinhai revolution.

A segment of the liberal camp, however, and notably Liang Qichao, threw in their lot with the top Manchu-Chinese militarist and bureaucratic echelon to combat revolution, and in a way also to combat the Qing dynasty. This group of liberals planned a coup d'état, a reshuffle of the Qing government, and institution of a policy that would work in its interests and stabilise the situation in the country. In the summer of 1911, Liang Qichao launched preparations for a 'palace revolution' to remove the leading conservatives in the Qing government. He thought he could rely on the palace guard, which his agents had infiltrated some months before. Use was also to be made of the two brothers of Guangxu—the young princes Zai Tao and Zai Xun, who were avowed enemies of Prince Qing and the regent. Liang's followers had also made contact with Wu Luzhen, commander of the New Army's 6th division in Baoding (who had participated in the revolt of the Independence Army in Hankou in 1900). His troops were to enter the capital and back up the coup. Liang was to 'reorganise' the Qing cabinet, make Zai Tao its premier, and thereby gain control over the ruling elite, and avert any revolutionary explosion. But the armed action mounted by the revolutionaries in Wuchang defeated Liang's designs.

In June 1911, Zhang Jian had a secret meeting with the disgraced Yuan Shikai. They discussed the political crisis in the country and

methods of placating the people. In the months to come, Zhang Jian and Yuan Shikai maintained covert contact through Yuan's agents in Tianjin and Shanghai. This relationship established by the leader of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang group of liberals with the chief of the Beiyang militarists had definite political sense. In the fight for a constitutional monarchy, mere support of the Chinese militarist-bureaucratic clique was no longer enough in the turbulent situation that preceded the Xinhai revolution: there had to be direct collusion with the Chinese feudal lords and compradores.

The Sichuan Rising—the Prologue of the Xinhai Revolution

By the autumn of 1911, the situation in China had become distinctly revolutionary. A revolutionary crisis was swiftly developing. The process surfaced most clearly in Sichuan, where the populace rose against a new imperialist loan designed to give foreign powers control over the construction of the Huguang railway crossing China's richest lands and joining the inland province with the Yangzi port of Hankou and the seaport of Guangzhou. The conflict, in the summer and autumn of 1911, held up the mirror to the chief class contradictions in Chinese society on the eve of the revolution.

It was in the books that the revolutionary crisis should take the form of a struggle by the bourgeoisie to recover 'rights' that had been usurped by foreigners, notably the right to build national railways. This reflected the basic economic interests of the rising bourgeoisie, which was straining to break the chains of imperialist oppression and to extend the scope for its own spirit of enterprise. Its resistance to the anti-national policy of the Qing government began to transcend the bounds of peaceful opposition.

As long ago as 1898, the American-owned China Development Company had concluded a contract with the manager of Chinese railways, Sheng Xuanhuai, to construct the Guangzhou-Hankou line. But the Americans never got around to building it. In 1905, the Qing government annulled the contract and declared that it would build the railway by itself. A government company was set up in Chengdu. But the government's subsidies were inadequate and a railway loan was floated in Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, and Guangdong among merchants, industrialists, and landlords to raise additional funds. When this proved insufficient, taxpayers were made to pay for supplementary shares.

Provincial tax offices pegged the size of the shares to the size of taxes for rented land, taxes on salt, dwellings, and so on. In effect, all people with an income of more than the worth of 10 *dan* of rice

were obliged to contribute 3 per cent of their annual income before taxes to the construction of the railway. The government issued special shares—'rice', 'salt', 'head tax' and others—and thereby made the bulk of the population of Guangdong, Hubei, Hunan, and Sichuan railway project shareholders.

In 1907, the mixed state-private company building the Sichuan-Hankou railway was converted into a private-sector joint-stock enterprise. Its management was in the hands of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and local *shenshi*, belonging to the camp of liberal constitutionalists.

In 1908, the prominent Chinese civil engineer Zhan Tianyou was invited to be chief engineer of the Sichuan-Hankou railway. He drew up blueprints and began laying tracks along the Yichang-Wanxian sector. Construction of the Guangzhou-Hankou line was resumed, too. This was evidence of the growing potential of the national bourgeoisie. But progress was slow: shortages of funds and materials, and of skilled personnel, delayed construction, and were compounded with corruption and 'squeeze' within the company and with abuses of local authorities.

Meanwhile, the imperialist powers kept building up pressure on the Qing government in a bid to seize complete control of Chinese railways. In the spring of 1911, a four-power banking consortium involving British, French, German, and U.S. capital, offered the Manchu government a loan for the construction of the Huguang railway, which would then be owned by the state. This, the powers hoped, would open for them a profitable field for investment, on the one hand, and buttress the Qing's finances in face of the revolutionary crisis, on the other. Later, they expected to force the Manchu court to grant the consortium exclusive rights to building and running the Huguang railway line. The throne was hard up, and jumped at the proposal because it would hold down growth of provincial autonomy and weaken the positions of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

On 9 May 1911, the throne published an edict 'nationalising' the Huguang railway. In keeping with its new course, it said, the government was taking the construction of the main railway lines into its own hands. All shares issued by railway companies in the provinces before the 3rd year of Xuantong (1911) were pronounced out-of-date and were to be withdrawn; construction was being renewed at once. All rules and regulations under which private commercial firms were given franchises to build and operate main railway lines were declared null and void, and would apply for the construction of approach and branch lines only. The Manchu Duan Fang was appointed *duban* or imperial commissioner of the Guangzhou-Hankou and Sichuan-Hankou railway projects. The provincial authori-

ties were instructed to withdraw commercial railway shares.

On 20 May 1911, Sheng Xuanhuai, minister of posts and communications, signed an official agreement with the four-power consortium for a joint loan of 5 million pounds sterling at 5 per cent interest. Formally intended for the construction of the Sichuan-Hankou and Guangzhou-Hankou railways, the loan was against the *liqin* and salt tax revenue in Hubei and Hunan provinces. Under the agreement, the foreign consortium would control the use of the loan and foreign technicians would supervise the construction and operation of the railway. In addition, the consortium in effect obtained monopoly rights to financing industrial and railway construction in the rest of China. In short, the Huguang loan was yet another act adding to China's enslavement.

The Qing government conceived 'nationalisation' as a forcible withdrawal of private share capital already invested in construction. This struck painfully at the interests of the Huguang railway shareholders. Holders of larger shares would be refunded only part of their face value, while the so-called rice, head-tax, and other shares were automatically invalidated and their owners, who were mostly peasants and urban petty bourgeois, would get no compensation at all.

To avoid joint action by people in the provinces concerned, the Qing government established different share redemption procedures for each province. In Hubei and Hunan, for example, some shares were paid off in full, but without interest. Money collected for railway construction was to be compensated with six per cent government bonds. In Guangdong, the government refunded 60 per cent of the face value in cash, and the remaining 40 per cent in bonds (without interest) redeemable by the treasury within ten years after completion of the railway project. The shareholders in Sichuan were the least favoured. Here, the government was willing to refund only 4 million *liang* in six per cent bonds; the rest of the sum, already invested in the Yichang section of the railway (amounting to more than 5 million *liang*), was to be written off.

The 'nationalisation', coupled with news of the Huguang loan, precipitated an outburst of fury in all the four provinces of Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, and Guangdong. It injured the interests not only of the bourgeoisie and landlords, but also those of peasants, artisans, and the petty bourgeoisie, who had paid the railway construction tax and owned a variety of small railway shares. The protest movement was led by liberal elements in the provincial consultative assemblies.

The earliest actions took place in Hubei and Hunan. In July, there were also actions in Guangdong. In many cities, foreign goods were boycotted. Patriotic leagues and societies sprang up. Leaflets and proclamations flooded the streets. Crowds attended meetings and demonstrations. The press attacked the policy of the government.

The provincial consultative assemblies formed societies for the protection of railways, and sent spokesmen to Beijing to lodge protests with the Qing government.

Yet the unrest in Sichuan was more serious than in the other provinces. On 17 June, a shareholders' meeting in Chengdu formed the Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways (Sichuan baolu tongzhihui) headed by Pu Dianjun and Luo Lun, liberal constitutionalists from the provincial consultative assembly. Branches of the society sprang up in most of the towns and counties of Sichuan, and students took a dedicated part in establishing them. The clergy, too, joined the movement. The Society was a legal political organisation through which the local bourgeoisie sought to marshal mass support for the fight against the 'nationalisation' of railways. To build up political action, the leadership went so far as to contact elders of local secret societies (particularly, the chiefs of the Sichuan chapter of the Elders Society, the *Gelaohui*). As before, liberal elements conceived the fight as a petition campaign. But in the setting of general public outrage, the movement soon developed into an armed rebellion.

The Qing were adamant. The government ignored the flow of petitions and appeals to cancel 'nationalisation' and tear up the loan agreement. More, the metropolitan authorities cut short attempts to influence the imperial clan of certain local administrators who saw the dire consequences of the conflict for the throne. At the end of July 1911, the throne reprimanded, and thereupon dismissed from office, the viceroy of Sichuan, Wang Renwen, for saying in his memorial that the railway loan would impair the country's sovereignty and incur national disgrace, causing internal chaos, with disaster menacing China from outside. Zhao Erfeng was appointed the new viceroy of Sichuan. Liu Shenyuan, a spokesman of Sichuan merchants and industrialists, who had come to the capital to seek redress on their behalf, was expelled from Beijing. The manager of the Sichuan railway was ordered by the minister of posts and communications to get on with the 'nationalisation', and for a start to use the available privately invested money to carry on the construction. This precipitated a fresh outburst of popular anger.

On 24 August, the Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways organised a mass meeting in Chengdu, attended by several tens of thousands of people. An appeal was drawn up to the new viceroy, Zhao Erfeng, criticising the moves of the minister of posts and communications, Sheng Xuanhuai. Proclamations called on shopkeepers to close their shops. Students were asked to stay away from their classrooms. Soon the strike of shopkeepers and students spread to the rest of the province. Reports arrived of mass rioting—of attacks on tax offices, police stations, and foreign churches and missions.

Liberal constitutionalists tried to hold down the movement. The Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways appealed to the public to show restraint, to respect the authorities, and to abstain from street gatherings, disorders, and attacks on churches. The liberals were giving the government to understand that they had no intention of harming the court. But the bullheadedness of the Qing authorities and the rising tide of popular disaffection made the local merchant and industrial elements resort to more radical forms of pressure on the throne. On 1 September they called on the populace to refuse paying the land tax and the special levies covering interest on foreign loans and the 1901 Boxer indemnity. For the government this meant an annual loss of several million *liang*. It reacted by ordering the Hubei provincial army under Duan Fang to move into Sichuan and restore order.

Shareholders of the railway company met in Chengdu on 6 September and called on the populace to prepare for self-defence. The Qing government declared that their appeal 'contained a call for independence, which is an unmitigated impertinence', and ordered Sichuan viceroy Zhao Erfeng to step up reprisals. On 7 September, he arrested the leaders of the Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways and the top administrators of the railway company, whom he lured into his residence with an invitation to negotiate. He ordered the dissolution of the Society and took over the premises of the railway company. The police and troops guarding the viceroy's residence opened fire on an unarmed crowd that had gathered to demand the release of the prisoners. Thirty-two were shot to death, and a few hundred were wounded.

This turn of events in Chengdu precipitated an armed rising all over Sichuan province. The petition movement grew into an anti-government rebellion. Unity League members Long Mingjian, Wang Tianjie, and others, helped organise armed struggle. In earlier stages of the movement (May to August), they had worked in legal political organisations of the liberal constitutionalists—the provincial consultative assembly, the Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways, and so on—where they propagated the idea of revolution and showed that the current crisis could be settled in one way only, that of overthrowing the Qing. The sole means of keeping the country afloat, they maintained, was to resort to revolutionary strategy. Unity League members worked with secret societies in Sichuan, and counted on them for support. In August 1911, Long and Wang held a conference in Zizhou region with Qin Zaigeng, chief of the local Elders Society, and agreed to convert the Society for the Protection of Sichuan Railways into the Army of Confederates (Tongzhijun). They also came to terms about preparing for armed action.

The armed rebellion was started chiefly by secret societies. The

army was not yet ready to join it. The first to go into action were members of secret societies in Xinjin county led by Hou Baozhai. On 7 September, his insurgent band and a detachment under Qin Zaigeng, which had marched from Huayang county, converged on Chengdu. Secret society units from more remote counties were also on the move. By mid-September, in fact, Chengdu was blockaded by a huge army. Viceroy Zhao Erfeng summoned troops from other parts of Sichuan to defend the city. This enabled him to hold it, but also facilitated insurgent action in the rest of the province.

The hostilities engulfed all of Sichuan. The Army of Confederates, consisting mostly of secret society members, included paupers, peasants, petty artisans and tradesmen, saltern workers, sugar-cane plantation labourers, builders of the Sichuan-Hankou railway, and a small element of *shenshi* and landlords. Student groups, too, and a few army units, made common cause with the secret societies. The rebellion also attracted people from the non-Han ethnic groups inhabiting the province—Yi, Tibetans, and so on.

After some days of fighting in the environs of Chengdu, the rebel army moved to other prefectures and counties. Hou Baozhai's 'southern' contingent was active in the Xinjin area, which became the centre of rebel action in the south-west of Sichuan. After Xinjin was retaken by government troops and Hou Baozhai was killed, the Army of Confederates broke up into groups that fought on by themselves. In the meantime, a large rebel detachment known as the 'eastern' contingent under Qin Zaigeng was active in Huayang and Renshou counties. Among the commanders of the 'eastern' contingent were Long Mingjian, Wang Tianjie, and other members of the Unity League.

In September, another Unity League member, Wu Yuzhang, reached Sichuan from Shanghai, and put himself at the head of the insurgent masses in Rongxian county. A fund-raising campaign was launched in aid of the 'southern' and 'eastern' contingents, and recruits were enlisted for a people's militia. After Wang Tianjie's detachment reached Rongxian, the county's 'independence' was proclaimed on 25 September and a provisional revolutionary committee formed under Wu Yuzhang.

Not until early October did Qing troops manage to suppress the chief seats of the rebellion, and at a high price. But when the armed rising in Wuchang broke out, the turbulence in Sichuan was still far from subdued. Though the insurgent armies were poorly organised and their actions were not co-ordinated and largely spontaneous, the Sichuan anti-government and anti-imperialist movement of the summer and autumn of 1911 elicited an eager response throughout China, and stimulated revolutionary sentiment. For that matter, it demoralised the Qing regime, and was a prologue to the now imminent revolution.

Part IV

THE OVERTHROW OF QING RULE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Chapter 15

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS FOR THE XINHAI REVOLUTION

The general state of the Qing Empire in the first decade of the twentieth century is best described as critical. The crisis that preceded the Xinhai revolution was not a phase in the usual economic cycle or any temporary over-strain of resources, social and otherwise, in a desperate attempt to close the gap of backwardness. Neither was it stagnation, general stagnation, as this is usually conceived, because it was accompanied by precipitous demolition of old-time structures, by aggravation of social contradictions, and by pervasive and galloping chaos. The latter originated from a combination of external and internal factors, and from an interlacement of bourgeois (capitalistic) and traditional processes. The spectrum of transitional phenomena and forms kept widening. The old feudal institutions endured far-reaching modifications for, though in a way protected by the foreign powers, they were being continuously eroded by the influence of the world capitalist system. In the process, the impact of the external factor increased greatly and rapidly, and this above all because the external factor acquired new features.

When China was reduced to semi-colonial status with the advent of the imperialist era, the nature and methods of foreign economic expansion changed perceptibly. Though, in substance, the early 20th century saw the Western states consolidate the rights and privileges they had fought for since the mid-19th century in a succession of trade wars, the swiftly growing export of merchandise was no longer as all-important for the British and other capitalists as it had been before. No longer was it the main purpose they pursued in China. Export of capital forged ahead as the chief instrument of imperialist subjugation and plunder. By the time the First World War broke out, foreign investment in China had more than doubled against 1900, rising from 750 million dollars to 1,650 million. About two-thirds

comprised direct investment, the rest indirect. And though this ratio prevailed in those first fourteen years of the 20th century, the physical growth of indirect investment led to a precipitous change of quality: while earlier China had been more or less successful in paying its foreign debts, it was now stripped both of the ability and the right to shake off the onerous burden of insolvency. By 1914, country's foreign debt rose to the vast sum of 835 million dollars, out of which nearly 58 per cent were the Boxer indemnities and loans incurred to pay the 1895 reparations to Japan. Foreign loans nearly doubled, adding up to 526 million dollars by the end of 1913, with loans for military and administrative needs amounting to 63 per cent of this sum and for railway construction and communications to 37 per cent.

As in the last five years of the 19th century, so in the first decade of the 20th, foreign capital went chiefly into the profitable field of direct investment, which was roughly double the indirect. Direct investment grew from 503 million dollars in 1902 to as much as 1,085 million in 1914. Apart from railway construction, transport, and communications, much of it went into foreign trade and into manufacturing and mining. Some two-thirds of all foreign investment was concentrated in property located in leased territories and foreign settlements: factories, mills, shops, docks, and municipal utilities using cheap local labour and cheap local raw materials to obtain higher-than-average profits.

The number of foreign-operated factories rose steeply. Between 1901 and 1911, British and other entrepreneurs established 91 enterprises, or only a few less than throughout the latter half of the 19th century. The original capital put into the factories, mills, mines, wharves, power stations, and so on by foreigners in those ten years was nearly 50 per cent greater than the investments of the previous 50 years. The largest investments went into mining and metal-working, resulting in next to undivided foreign sway in these fields. Through loans to Chinese enterprises control was seized of the entire Chinese production of pig iron. Japanese firms financed Hanyeping Co., and, making the most of its difficulties, obliged it year after year to supply ore and pig iron to Japan at low prices. By 1912, foreign interests were also in possession or control of more than half the country's coal production, including nine-tenths of the partially mechanised collieries. Growth in the number of foreign-owned cotton mills and food-processing enterprises was also quite considerable. The main emphasis was on textiles, an industry where a fierce battle was still in progress for monopoly control. This applied first of all to cotton spinning, where by 1911 foreign interests had possession of 32 per cent of the spindles. By building new docks, wharves, and power stations, foreigners consolidated their position in ship-

building and the utilities of the larger Chinese cities. In sum, the precipitous growth of enterprise greatly strengthened the foreign sector, securing its domination in a number of crucial industries.

Britain was still the leading investor. Its capital more than doubled from 1902 to 1913, while China's indebtedness grew proportionately. The British loans were given preferentially for economic undertakings. From 1900 to 1911, Britain alone or jointly with other powers floated 17 loans (including 14 railway loans) in China, and subscribed to ten of them on its own. British capital was highly active in industrial enterprise. The British invested in the construction of cotton and silk mills, tobacco factories, and so on. Large funds went into the Kaiping coal mines, into wharves, telephones, power stations, into housebuilding in Shanghai, and into the development of non-ferrous metals. And Britain's direct investments were nearly twice as high as its share in foreign loans.

Ranking second to Britain was tsarist Russia, which invested heavily in the Chinese Eastern Railway, in the food industry of Northern Manchuria, and in government papers. Japanese investments, insignificant until 1905, leaped high after Japan took possession of Southern Manchuria. Most of the money went into direct investment in that region, where Mantetsu Co. (controlled by the South Manchuria Railway) and its enterprises began playing a special role, especially in mining. German and French investments, too, grew substantially. Loans to China by Germany and France, chiefly for administrative purposes and railway construction, were more often than not subscribed jointly with Britain, while direct investments were put chiefly into real estate, enterprises, and transport in the respective 'spheres of influence' (Shandong and Yunnan provinces). United States involvement was more modest in those years, owing to the failure of U.S. financiers to penetrate the 'spheres of influence' of other imperialist powers.

The turn of the century was highlighted by a scramble for railway concessions. From 1900 to 1913, foreign powers saddled the Qing government with 29 new and supplementary railway loans. The construction of railways in the interior provinces stimulated sales of foreign goods, and shipment of cheap raw materials, leading to a one-sided development of exportable local production. China's position as an agrarian and primary goods appendage of the imperialist system became more distinct. Its economic dependence on foreign capital increased. The railways also had the effect of invigorating the social division of labour, eroding the foundations of the subsistence economy, enlivening the internal market, and thereby stimulating growth of the capitalist mode of production.

The flow of Western and Japanese capital, the succession of loans and, especially, railway construction heightened the importance of

foreign banking in China's economy as the mover of financial and commercial expansion. With the banks playing a more conspicuous part in the country's economy, the monetary intervention gained in magnitude. Emission of Chinese and foreign legal tender was in the hands of roughly a dozen foreign banking establishments. In 1912, foreign legal tender in circulation in China accounted for 45 per cent of the paper money used in the country.

The turn of the century was also a turn in the process of China's subordination to foreign capital. The foundation was laid at that time for methodical and licentious imperialist plunder.

China's loss of economic independence, the basic effect of that period, was compounded with further incursions into the Chinese market. The surrender imposed under the protocol that culminated the Boxer uprising had an instant effect on commercial policy. The new trade treaties the Qing Empire signed with Britain (in 1902) and with Japan and the United States (in 1903) accorded foreigners additional privileges for semi-wholesale and retail trade in the interior. No *liqin* was charged for foreign goods even after their sale to Chinese merchants or compradores. The foreign origin of the commodity guaranteed its 'extraterritoriality' in China's internal markets. Thus, the surrender regime spread to the field of commerce. Another 38 towns were opened to foreign trade between 1901 and 1912. Altogether, by 1912, there were 82 open cities and ports. With anchorages and fuelling stations numbering 25, the total passed the one hundred mark. Practically no large trading centres were closed to foreigners. China's foreign trade increased, with the value of exports doubling from 1901 to 1911, and imports rising 63 per cent.

The British Empire still ranked first in the China trade, accounting for half of it, though the role of the British Isles continued to decline. The rivalry among the imperialist powers for commercial influence in China, and for a redivision of sales markets, grew keener and keener. Japan and the United States were breathing down Britain's neck, undermining its monopoly on imports of cotton goods and opium, and exports of oil-yielding crops, and so on. Japanese and American commodities were making inroads into the traditionally British sphere of influence—the southern provinces and the Yangzi valley. China was turning more and more into a supplier of cheap raw material: cotton for Japan's textile mills, soya beans for Japanese and Western food industries, silk for factories in the United States, and tea for tsarist Russia and the U.S.A.

The greater influence on China of the world market made the country's economy still more dependent on foreign trade. The Western and Japanese bourgeoisie, commercial and industrial, intensified the exploitation of the China market. Non-equivalence had sunk deep root in China's economic relations with the imperialist powers.

As a concomitant, the West's commercial expansion, which destroyed Chinese crafts and the semi-subsistence economy of the small urban and rural producers, stimulated monetary circulation and steadily destroyed barter. Demand in China's internal markets rose visibly, paving the way for the development of capitalism on Chinese soil—national capitalism as well as foreign.

This extensive ingress of foreign capital had a depressing effect on the condition of the urban and rural masses. Rising imports of cheap manufactured goods (yarn, fabrics, metal goods, paraffin, refined sugar, and dyes) either impaired or put an end to a number of once flourishing village industries. The ravages that this brought about were aggravated by the agricultural crisis that had begun in the mid-19th century and still continued. The declining population of draught animals, the developing shortages of fertiliser, and the disastrously dropping soil fertility caused ever more visible stagnation in crop farming, that traditional foundation of China's economy. The declining harvests in the provinces along the Yangzi, the rice bowl of China, were especially alarming. Increasing agrarian overpopulation made the food problem doubly acute, since more and more arable land was being sown to industrial crops. Soil erosion and salination reduced the area under cultivation in the southern provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Fujian. Though the colonisation of deserted lands in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, fairly vigorous at the turn of the century, was relieving the tense situation in the northern provinces to some extent, it had practically no effect on the Yangzi valley and South China; those chief regions of agrarian overpopulation. With overpopulation increasing, the per capita area of cultivated plots began to shrink. Medium-sized peasant farms could not hold their own, and their share in the totality of households declined.

China's northern regions suffered from constant floods and droughts. In the first ten years of the 20th century natural calamities struck the Yangzi valley on a more and more massive scale due to the ongoing deterioration and neglect of dams, dykes, and ditches. In 1910-1911, the worst flood in 60 years occurred in the Yangzi valley, which was inundated nearly along its entire length from Yichang to the sea. This brought famine and ruin to millions of people in Jiangsu, Anhui, and Jiangxi. The plight of Hubei province, which had suffered successive floods between 1909 and 1911, was especially disastrous.

Since the latter half of the 19th century, commodity production had begun to grow at a faster rate. The influence of the world market on the Chinese countryside increased. The export of silk, tea, soya bean, cotton, and oil-yielding crops went up. Specialisation continued in cash cropping areas. Cotton-growing was on the increase in the valleys of the Yangzi and Huanghe, and silk farming in Jiangsu,

Zhejiang, and Anhui, the Xijiang valley (the south of Guangdong and Guangxi), and the Shandong and Liaodong peninsulas. Areas under opium poppy kept expanding until 1906, especially in the western provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Shenxi. Rice production expanded in the Yangzi valley. Areas under cash crops grew swiftly in Manchuria.

The spread of small scale cash cropping towards the close of the 19th century caused economic and social change among the vast multitude of peasants. The first signs of social differentiation appeared. By the turn of the century, the more prosperous peasants displayed a tendency of hiring labourers. The old-time division of peasants into rich and poor, into propertied and tenant farmers, could no longer account for the intricacies of the rural social structure. New social types and groups emerged gradually within the old. Apart from the rampant exploitation of the peasantry as a whole by landlords and the state, bourgeois relations, though still in their infancy, were springing up alongside the old-time relationships between those who paid and those who collected rent and taxes. Gradually, the stratification gave shape to new social types of peasants, and this in rural manufacturing as well as in farming. But the new developments were still barely felt. The antagonistic interests of the various groups within the mass of peasants were still indistinct.

The winds of change also affected the landlords. By the turn of the century, the group of landlords that had turned bourgeois and aspired to new sources of income, including the *shenshi* gentry, was visibly more active. The bulk, it is true, was less inclined to indulge in capitalistic methods of farming and much more in capitalistic investing in urban industries, commerce, transport, and the like. Landlords of this group, especially *shenshi*, invested readily in all sorts of joint-stock companies and collective undertakings. In the ten years before the Xinhai revolution, they put several tens of millions of *yuan* into industrial enterprises, banks, commerce, shipping, and insurance, chiefly in the Yangzi valley and the southern maritime regions. Those in South China were gripped by the railway fever. They participated in campaigns promoting national construction of railways, and put large funds into shares of the two companies laying the Huguang lines. Some formed companies for the development of waste land. Land development attracted the *shenshi* gentry, civil servants, merchants, and industrialists. The flow of capital into land development was at its highest between 1905 and 1909, coinciding with the general rise of capitalistic enterprise in China.

The *embourgeoisement* of part of the landlord class, which included a section of civil servants and *shenshi*, whose interests were much the same as those of the bourgeoisie in general, took on a more specific complexion by the end of the decade. The common dissatis-

faction with the economic policy of the throne was aggravated by the skyrocketing tax burden, due above all to the huge Boxer indemnity of 1901. To pay it, surcharges were introduced on the basic land (*diding*) and food (*caoliang*) taxes. Indirect taxes, too, like the salt tax, the poll levy for salt, and the opium, tobacco, sugar, wine, tea, and other taxes, were raised substantially. There were also taxes for leasing premises, above all shops. The levies on property transactions were increased, as were the surcharge for pawnbrokers' patents and the pawnbrokers' tax. Since many landlords were also engaged in commerce and money-lending, the new extortionate exactions effected their incomes from rent and from their businesses. The affluent and middle peasants, too, were victimised.

Apart from the need of paying reparations, the other reason for the fiscal explosion of 1901-1909 was the throne's intention of shifting the cost of the New Policy to landlords and peasants. A special surcharge was added to the land tax (*mujuan*), and a series of additional levies—the school, police, and railway tax—was introduced. There were also imposts to pay for the preparation of local self-government bodies and for military training. Regular obligatory deductions from the land rent were made, called subscriptions to railway shares. The latter were especially burdensome for landlords in South China. Furthermore, the tax burden was aggravated by inflation, and by the machinations and undisguised abuses practised by local officials.

The new direct and indirect taxes were highly injurious for the middle and affluent peasants, and especially for the rural poor. They were also an additional blight for the urban population. In combination with the ongoing inflation, they caused discontent among merchants, traders, and artisans. But the paradoxical thing about the situation in 1909-1911 was that the discontent among villagers and townsmen over the new taxes did not really put the continued rule of the dynasty in jeopardy. So long as the Manchu court and officialdom were fenced off from the fury of the labouring masses by the partially neutral and partially loyal section of the dominant class—the landlords and, above all, the scholar gentry—there was no special danger for the Qing throne. One more collision over taxes, of which there had been so many in China's history, was not likely to transcend the limits of the 'old Chinese riots' that were habitual in medieval times. The new element in the prevailing situation—and this is what really alarmed the throne—was that the government's fiscal policy had inadvertently offended the loyalty of a large section of those who shielded the throne and controlled the situation in the localities at the most massive and the most crucial level of social governance—county, district, and lower. This impairment of loyalty occurred in the superstructure in a setting of internal and external

peace and order—which was something that had never been witnessed before.

The fiscal explosion of 1901-1909 injured the interests of land-lords—the *dahu*, *fushen*, *tuba* (*tuhao*), and the ordinary *dizhu*,* who were officially the biggest taxpayers. To begin with, they faced a steep increase in taxes on their landed property. More, their practice of taking the taxes out on their tenants was unlikely to make up for the damage to their interests inflicted by the imperial treasury. The treasury's assault was, indeed, hardest on the middle and, especially, the small *dizhu*. Furthermore, the high-pressure extortion of the surplus product by fiscal devices reduced the measure of private feudalistic exploitation (by rents and loans) which naturally created additional complications between landlords and their clients. The fiscal pressures of 1901-1909 put an end to the relative post-Taiping Rebellion 'tranquillity' in the countryside, and set in motion a far-flung peasant movement. This was least of all directed against landlords. But it created a climate of alarm and insecurity among them. Peasant actions, punitive expeditions mounted in retaliation, and the inevitable plunder that accompanied them, compelled many landlords to abandon their estates and move to towns, where they had the protection of government troops. At the same time, the new indirect taxes made inroads into the profits from the commercial and industrial enterprise of landlords and *shenshi* indulging in capitalistic money-making.

The situation of rural *shenshi*, often arbiters in conflicts between peasants and the authorities, was made complicated and precarious. The tax assault of the treasury put an end to the relative 'peaceful' period in the time-honoured pattern of relations. The *shenshi* faced a hard choice and, indeed, were spurred to take part, even in places lead, anti-tax actions. Their opposition to the government assumed new dimensions. Besides, they saw the fiscal burden of 1901-1909 as the result of the Qing's surrender to the West and inability to resist the onslaughts of 'foreign devils'. These two factors came into evidence very clearly in the South during the railway conflict of the summer and autumn of 1911, and lessened the loyalty of *shenshi* and landlords to the Manchu dynasty. The Qing's disregard for their interests stimulated liberal constitutionalist sentiment. The mass of *shenshi* and landlords, who were far removed from the practical drive for the triumph of liberal and constitutionalist ideas, joined the opposition. They saw it as a means of restoring 'order' in the Celestial Empire. As a result, the sharp change in Beijing's tax policy

* *Dahu*, a major landlord; *fushen*, an affluent proprietor of *shenshi* background; *tuba* and *tuhao*, wealthy landlords, oppressors of peasants, with no *shenshi* affiliations; *dizhu*, any landlord.

created a new critical element of immense danger to the Qing. Indeed, it was the detonator of the revolution of 1911-1913.

Winds of change swept through the crafts. In the first ten years of the 20th century the crafts were increasingly made to feel the disadvantages of technical backwardness, and the absence of protectionism. Arbitrary rule and the obstacles raised by the Qing authorities were another source of trouble. The predominance of old-time economic structures held down the growth of the productive forces. Productivity of labour was low, products were of poor quality, and production costs were high. Local crafts were gradually losing the home market. Raw materials were becoming scarce. The specifically Chinese crafts, such as the making of paper, brushes, porcelain, umbrellas, fans, and mats, were going downhill. In these fields, lesser artisans suffered ruin, but so did owners of workshops and manufactories. New industries were springing up, brought to life by Western influences and the demands of the world market. Workshops and manufactories, and large numbers of home craftsmen were engaged in making matches, cigarettes, and in the production of albumen. Enterprises producing glass, candles, soap, knitted goods, carpets and rugs, and rope were proliferating, and their products conformed to foreign standards. In the old fields of tea processing, sugar and salad oil refining, and in textiles, small-scale producers were going out of business, and only larger enterprises survived and grew.

The early 20th century witnessed a continuous erosion of medieval structures—the home and guild crafts, and especially the treasury's manufactories using forced labour. The government was powerless to reverse the decline of the latter, and after the 1911 revolution they became all but non-existent. Though all the institutions of the old-time guilds (*hang*, *bang*, *gongsuo*, and *huiguan*) survived, capitalist relation began to invade them: wage labour came into ever greater use, and the capitalist nature of relations between employer and labourer became increasingly apparent. Production under guild auspices and small-scale guild-based commerce shrank steadily under the impact of enterprise within and without the guilds. According to a census taken in 1912, more than 2 million 'artisan households' (*jianghu*) engaged in small-scale crafts with 13 million people employed in production. Producers and working members of their families totalled some 10 million, and some 3 million were wage labourers. The percentage of wage labour was apparently 23 to 25 per cent. In some fields, however, such as sugar refining, brick and tile baking, matchmaking, and cloth weaving, use of wage labour by the 'artisan households' was considerable. Many of the 'households' were workshops based on family co-operation, and some were even modest-sized manufactories.

By the close of the 19th century, the crisis of the medieval struc-

tures reached a stage where any further growth of artisan industry was ruled out unless it used entrepreneurial methods—home work, workshops, and manufactories. Only by these methods could the influx of factory-made goods be matched and combated. As a response, various forms of small-scale enterprise appeared in nearly all fields of artisan production, especially in the maritime provinces. Some manufacturing techniques saw important improvements. In addition to improvements on various kinds of wooden looms, use was being made of Japanese foot-operated looms with a metal wheel, which raised productivity of labour about ten times over. Silk reeling was advanced through a tread-mill type metal machine replacing the outdated manual wooden reels. Metal cotton gins were spreading quickly. Developments such as these were prompting a flow of merchant capital into textile manufacturing. Affluent artisans and petty traders went into the yarn and silk lines. Petty proprietors began hiring labourers. Formerly independent weavers and ruined spinners fell under the sway of middlemen. The home-work system took deeper root in cotton and silk weaving in Jiangsu, Fujian, Shandong, Zhili, Zhejiang, and Guangdong.

In the massive manual industries the percentage of wage labourers was much lower than the percentage of artisans dependent on middlemen—merchants and money-lenders. Prior to the 1911-1913 revolution, merchant capital in proto-industrial production was still far ahead of industrial capital. Loans, advance payments, credits, sale of raw material and purchase of ready products were still the chief methods of exploiting small producers in town and countryside.

The specificity of the development of capitalism in China's manual industries was there for all the world to see: slow passage from lower to higher forms—from home work to manufactory and from manufactory to factory; a system of handing out work to home workers, which predominated over workshops and manufactories, and limited capital in manufacturing.

In the period preceding the Xinhai revolution, the development of capitalism in artisan industries gained considerable pace. There were already over 16,000 workshops and manufactories by that time, with nearly 485,000 wage labourers. But the proliferation and growth of factories spoke of the impotence and backwardness of old-time manufacturing methods. These were relinquishing their former place of prominence in China's economic pattern. The small size of enterprises, their technical backwardness and shortage of capital, instability in face of the competition of imported goods and domestic factory-made articles, the frequent bankruptcies and temporary closures—all this was foreshadowing the doom of small-scale enterprise. Still, entrepreneurship in artisan industries, at least during the period before the Xinhai revolution, was spurring the growth of the

capitalist mode of production. There were several million people engaged in home work, with the raw material provided by entrepreneurs, and there were about 3 million more wage labourers in the 'artisan households', plus nearly half a million workers employed in manufactories.

The bourgeoisie engaged in manufacturing—consisting of owners of workshops and manufactories, of various 'firms', 'offices', and 'shops' that handed out work to home workers or bought the produce of independent small producers, commission agents and middlemen, and a variety of operators who exploited the wage labour of artisans—made up the largest section of the burgeoning Chinese industrial bourgeoisie. By 1911, such entrepreneurs apparently numbered several tens of thousands. So, in view of the continuously tougher competition of factory-made commodities at the turn of the 20th century, the old practices of official interference and abuse, the old restrictions and tax pressures on manufacturing became next to unbearable, increasing the hostility and intensifying the opposition to the Qing regime among manufacturers and most merchants.

Though manual industries continued to grow in the first ten years of the 20th century, modern types of industry and transport in both the national and foreign sectors were gaining ground, with significant consequences for the still very weak capitalist mode of production.

The construction of factories was visibly more intensive. Only 204 Chinese enterprises had been built in the thirty last years of the 19th century (1872-1900), and the relatively larger number of 386 in the first ten years of the 20th. The specific feature of the decade preceding the revolution was the decline of the once predominant treasury-run and mixed 'official-private' industries. Despite considerable government investments and drastic measures to raise efficiency in enterprises of this sector, their profitability kept dropping steadily. They could no longer be saved by various monopoly rights to manufacturing and marketing specified types of products, by government funding, by subsidies, and the like. The growth of private enterprise served notice loud and clear that state-capitalist industry was no longer viable. While treasury-run and 'official-private' enterprises still dominated in mining and in the iron-and-steel industry, private capital had taken over the reins in all other fields.

In 1901-1911, the volume of private industrial investment nearly trebled against the preceding thirty years (1872-1900). Chinese entrepreneurs founded 319 new factories and mills, mines and quarries, with total assets surpassing 66 million *yuan*. These new enterprises comprised 82 per cent of total Chinese-owned enterprises and accounted for 72 per cent of total assets. Private enterprise had become the leading structure in the nation's industrial capitalism.

In this development of both private and state-capitalist industry there were three clear-cut periods—the post-Boxer Uprising period of 1901-1904; the period of industrial boom and of a movement for 'the restoration of rights stolen by foreigners' (1905-1908), and the period of the pre-revolution recession (1909-1911).

The period of 1905-1908 stands apart as a time of 'economic' movements started by *shenshi*, the bourgeoisie, and the stratum of landlords who had taken the capitalist road. The movements were directed to buttressing the position of these groups in the country's economy, and to elbowing out foreign capital. The *shenshi* and bourgeoisie channelled the anti-imperialist feeling of the mass of the Chinese people chiefly into the for them most advantageous economic area, inspiring anti-foreign boycotts and campaigns 'for the restoration of rights stolen by foreigners'. In due course, the struggle developed into a movement 'for the protection of railways' and against any new foreign railway loans (1909-1911). An anti-American boycott was launched in the Southern and South-Eastern provinces in 1905. In 1907-1908, there was a boycott of Japanese goods in South China, and in 1908 an anti-German boycott. The main component of these movements was refusal to buy foreign commodities. The bourgeoisie, in alliance with guild merchants and artisans, applied this measure in a bid to at least weaken foreign competition, to improve its position in the country's domestic market, and enhance the state of national industry. During the boycotts, calls were issued to assist Chinese enterprises, and to establish new ones on private investments and funds subscribed to by the general public.

This aim was still more outspokenly formulated by the movement 'for the restoration of rights'. In 1906, in Anhui, a campaign called for the restoration to China of the British mining concession. This was matched by a campaign against foreign mining companies in Shanxi and Henan in 1906 and 1907. In 1907 in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the *shenshi* and local merchants and industrialists organised a broad movement against the British loan for the building of the Shanghai-Hangzhou-Ningbo railway. A movement for the return to China of local mines spread across Anhui in 1908. The main emphasis in the campaign 'for the restoration of rights' was formally laid on revoking concessions 'granted' to foreign and mixed (state and foreign) mining companies. The latter were forced to yield ground, and agreed to sell their assets and shares. The redemption dragged out from 1907 until 1911, and impelled public collections and donations of funds to augment the treasury's allocations. The movement also concerned new foreign concessions, loans, and a variety of industrial and railway projects. The chief economic aim of the Chinese bourgeoisie, however, was to establish national enterprises. Capitalising on the prevalent patriotic and nationalist sentiment, the *shenshi*, the

bourgeoisie, and landlords, collected public donations, floated industrial, and other shares among the population, and even went to the length of introducing semi-official levies where they could through their representatives.

China's bourgeois elements tried to make up for the general shortage of capital by a politicised mobilisations of additional funds, hoping thereby to push back the foreign sector. By and large, the initiators of the movement succeeded in organising an inflow of cash from merchants, overseas Chinese, landlords, *shenshi*, officials, and so on. This, coupled with other factors, paved the way for the industrial boom of 1905-1908. As a result, six times as much private, state, and mixed capital was invested in machine production in those few years than in the entire preceding post-Boxer period. A brief period of company promotion was seen, with as many as 114 diverse national industrial enterprises being founded in a matter of four years (1905-1908)—mostly in the cities of Jiangsu and other maritime provinces, of the Yangzi valley, above all Shanghai and its environs, and in Guangzhou-Shunde, Wuhan, and Tianjin. But these industrial areas were but tiny islands in the boundless ocean of the appallingly backward agrarian economy. The infirmity of national enterprises was illustrated first of all by the small number of large-scale undertakings and the obvious predominance of small ones. The biggest factories and mines were either treasury-owned or mixed enterprises. Large-scale private undertakings were few and belonged mainly to compradores and prominent officials.

For China, the early 20th century was a time of visible growth of the social forces shaped by the capitalist mode of production. With the expansion of factory industries both in the national and foreign sectors, the pace of the emergence of a Chinese proletariat quickened. But the working class of China was not yet a serious factor in the country's political development, though the rate of its growth was fairly high. From 1895 to 1911, the number of factory workers and miners increased five times over, and totalled some 600,000 by the time of the Xinhai revolution. This growth in numbers drew on the influx to the cities of dislocated peasants, and on the ruin of artisans, and on labourers of workshops or manufactories that were going over to machine production or closing their doors. The few strikes that occurred were mostly spontaneous and confined to economic demands. The most widespread method of seeking redress was that of damaging or destroying machinery, equipment, or production premises. Strikers lacked unity, being divided by strife between provincial groups, by lack of organisation, and by surviving old-time prejudices. To all this must be traced the insignificant role that the proletariat played in China's social and political developments prior to and during the bourgeois revolution of 1911-1913.

The role of the national bourgeoisie, whose ranks were swelling not only in industry but also in other economic fields such as river and coastal shipping, was immeasurably greater. As many as twenty new private Chinese shipping companies were established in the ten years before the revolution. Bourgeoisified *shenshi*, landlords, and a variety of other entrepreneurs also showed a keen interest in railway construction. Making the most of the experience they had gained in the movement 'for the restoration of rights', bourgeois and *shenshi* quarters launched a massive campaign 'for the protection of railways' and against foreign railway loans. The struggle for this new and profitable field gave rise to the early small railway companies of Fujian and Jiangsu. In 1905, two mixed joint-stock companies were formed involving treasury funds to build the Huguang railways, with one line running from Wuhan to Guangzhou and the other from Wuhan to Chengdu. Total assets were close to 40 million *yuan*. Part belonged to the government, part was being raised from special taxes and public levies paid chiefly by landed proprietors, and the rest was from shares floated by subscription and in other ways among *shenshi*, landlords, and the bourgeoisie of Sichuan, Hunan, Guangdong, and Hubei. By 1911, the huge scale of the impending construction and the magnitude of the expected profits made the two Huguang railway companies the central attraction for the propertied class investing in transport.

Trade and finance was another field in which the national bourgeoisie was proliferating. With the capitalist mode of production taking deeper root, merchant and usury capital in the maritime provinces and the Yangzi cities was adopting foreign methods of investment and crediting. The upper stratum of old-time merchants and usurers in the treaty ports, first of all Shanghai, was gradually changing into a new style financial bourgeoisie. The Zhejiang financial group (*zhejiangbang*), its backbone consisting of the nine richest money-lender clans of Shanghai owning some forty of the biggest money-changing shops (*qianzhuang*), forged into prominence. Using its financial power, this elite controlled the other, smaller *qianzhuang* in the city, and was, indeed, Shanghai's greatest economic power second only to the foreign sector. It derived its strength not only from its gigantic monetary assets, but also from the special role it played as middleman between foreign interests and local merchants. The Zhejiang group financed large-scale Chinese purchases of domestic raw materials or products ordered by Western firms or in anticipation of demand. It maintained close contacts with foreign banks, and transacted short-time foreign bank loans. This gave it a standing of a special kind. It won the regard and respect of bureaucrats and of the *shenshi* gentry, and especially so after the country's financial centre shifted from Beijing to Shanghai following the Boxer

Uprising. Sponsoring compradores, bankers, industrialists, and shipowners, the group gradually fused with the national bourgeoisie. Many a millionaire capitalist came from its midst.

The capitalist mode of production kept expanding. By 1910, China had as many as 327 companies with a total stated capital of 172 million *yuan*. Out of these, 168 were industrial enterprises, and the rest were commercial, banking, transport, insurance, and warehousing firms. From 1895 to 1913, more than 90 million *yuan* were invested in private fully or partially mechanised enterprises, not counting all sorts of mixed investments. Altogether, 607 Chinese factories were in operation by 1911, with another more than 16,000 manufactories and workshops. The bourgeoisie in China was attached to several economic sectors, modes of production, and types of entrepreneurship—factory and artisan production, national and foreign enterprises, private and mixed state-private undertakings. This was one of the reasons for its political and economic disunity, the determining factor being the existence of two levels of capitalist production unequal in size and quantity, and different in economic maturity. At the upper level were the modern, above all machine-using forms of enterprise that came to the country from abroad, and at the lower the backward forms of spontaneous origin based on a blend of manual labour and middlemen's capital. These two levels, and the concomitant distinctions, existed within nearly all the groups of the bourgeoisie in all industries and trades.

This vertical economic duality of the bourgeoisie was projected in the social status of the entrepreneur. Two types of bourgeois privileges obtained in the country: privileges accorded by the state and the feudalistic superstructure to *shenshi* and officials, on the one hand, and the comrade privileges accorded by the foreign sector. The 'exclusiveness' of the upper strata was fostered not only by capitalist methods of investing capital, but also by the accumulation of wealth outside the extremely weak capitalist structures. For in the Qing Empire at the turn of the 20th century none other than officials, *shenshi*, and compradores were the pioneers of initial accumulation and bourgeois enterprise. By 1894, the overall wealth accumulated by compradores was in excess of 530 million *liang*, and it is quite safe to say that the upper stratum of the bourgeoisie in China at the turn of the century was an elite, with the privileges of *shenshi* and officials, and those of the compradores acting as the wall that separated the elite from the lower, more 'massive' segments of the bourgeoisie. In short, the Chinese bourgeoisie of the period preceding the Xinhai revolution was, as it were, at two different levels, and each had its distinctive juridical and economic status. The elite of that period was the bearer of two opposite beginnings—the capitalist forms that were the highest in the China of that time, and

the medieval estate privileges.

In the setting of the old-time society, the middle strata were being continuously eroded. The more capitalistically mature entrepreneurs bought themselves the titles of *shenshi*, minor ranks, and land, and ascended to the level of the elite, thus continuously weakening the 'middle strata'. The latter's undeveloped state enfeebled the vertical ties within the structure of the bourgeoisie. In other words, the bourgeoisie took shape at two levels only—that of the elite, and that of the 'massive' strata. Both of these were, in effect, dissociated and only slightly dependent on each other. As a result, there was not a 'bourgeoisie in general', but what may be described as 'two bourgeoisies'. One was the more or less exclusive privileged upper stratum connected with modern forms of capitalism brought into the country from without, and the second was a majority exposed to social, economic, and juridical difficulties that organised lower types of entrepreneurship of a spontaneous origin and at the level of chiefly manual manufacture. In a way, the latter entrepreneurs were still a proto-bourgeoisie typical of the period before the opium wars.

The specificity of the inner structure of the Chinese bourgeoisie on the eve of the 1911-1913 revolution was not just the vertical gap between the elite and the lower strata, but also the heterogeneity of the elite itself, which consisted of two main groups—the officials and *shenshi*, on the one hand, and the compradores, on the other. Furthermore, the bigger capitalists of merchant and usurer background, including a rapidly growing faction of returned Chinese, gravitated towards the elite. In the specific conditions of a semi-colony that China was at the time, the top group of entrepreneurs sought a foothold in one of two centres—the state apparatus or the foreign sector. Later, too, it developed by the dictates of this dualism. And we may add that the division of the Chinese bourgeoisie into a national and a compradore bourgeoisie occurred only at the top, elite level, and did not affect the foundation of the social complex as a whole. The compradores did not amount to any independent stratum or section of the bourgeoisie. They were no more than a fairly small faction of the elite, though highly influential. The returned Chinese who had made their great fortunes abroad should also come under the head of the elite. This added to the looseness of the inner structure of the bourgeoisie as a whole, even though the factor of dual dependence was practically imperceptible at the lower level of the 'massive' strata.

Another thing that divided the elite was the many narrow groups and closed 'clans', especially in the field of finance and credit. In the North, the most influential was the 'communications clique' (*jiao-tongfa*), and in Shanghai the Zhejiang financial group.

The division of the bourgeoisie was not merely structural, but also

regional. There were a few basic and a number of secondary centres of attraction and concentration, first of all Shanghai, Guangzhou, the Beijing-Tianjin area, and Wuhan. This was not exclusively due to the geographic remoteness and economic dissociation of these seats of capitalism from one another in the absence of a China-wide market, but also to the localistic peculiarities of the various groups, at least at the elite level. Thanks to the higher degree of economic development in Jiangnan and Guangdong, the bourgeoisie in the Shanghai and Guangzhou centres was far more numerous and dynamic (on the political plane as well) than in the more backward North. The disparity of the Zhili group (which gravitated to the state apparatus) and the Jiangsu-Zhejiang group (which gravitated to the foreign sector) provided graphic evidence of dual dependence.

The isolation of local groups from one another showed the weakness of the horizontal bonds within the nascent bourgeoisie. The undeveloped state of these bonds at the elite level stripped the new social class of certain essential properties of the Chinese identity. The chief reason why the local groups did not merge on the basis of the 'massive' strata was the absence of a single all-China market, and the priority given to regional over national economic ties in the absence of a developed infrastructure.

In a sense, China's economic fragmentation made each of the local groups a bourgeoisie of the corresponding regional market. And in some cases the latter was more closely associated with the remote external market rather than the neighbouring one. This particular type of market economy prevented any consolidation of horizontal bonds at the level of the 'massive' strata.

China's division into 'spheres of influence' made matters worse. The dense network of internal customs offices collecting the *liqin* and *changguanshui*, and the effect this had of inhibiting the flow of goods, aggravated the division among local groups at practically all levels. Other factors that hindered the organic fusion of the bourgeoisie was the as yet incomplete formation of the Chinese nation, the significant ethno-dialectal and provincial distinctions, and the multiplicity of weights and measures, and of monetary units, including foreign.

In addition, the rising social entity had not yet flung off the medieval shackles of urban corporation—of guilds (*hang*, *gongsuo*, *yahang*), and native societies (*bang*, *huiguan*). In 1911, the 'massive' strata of the bourgeoisie were, by and large, still held down by the system of corporative micro-communities, including those of entrepreneurs and the 'eastern' corporations (*donghang*), as distinct from the purely artisan 'western' (*xihang*) ones. The bulk of the merchants and practically all manufacturers were divided into many thousands of cells of this kind across China in a setting where horizontal bonds

predominated. In 1911, the social identity of the non-elitist sections of the Chinese bourgeoisie was distinctly dual: there was a sense of belonging to a new community, and at the same time affiliation with some old cell.

The emergence of trade associations (*shanghui*) up and down the country that began in 1903 was a milestone on the road to the consolidation of the bourgeoisie. Still, it altered little or nothing in the bonds that tied the lower strata of entrepreneurs to the guilds, because the commercial *bang*, *huiguan*, *gongsuo*, and *yahang* joined the *shanghui* as a corporate body and usually in the capacity of associate members. With only few exceptions, the corporations retained their inner organisation and discipline, putting the members of the new associations under a dual control. As a result, by 1911 the bulk of the bourgeoisie had failed to overcome the diffuseness created by the guilds and native societies.

All the above suggests a direct link between the social and political potential of the bourgeoisie in China in the early 20th century, and the near absence of any unifying, cementing tendencies. On the eve of the Xinhai revolution, owing to the weakness of vertical and horizontal bonds, the Chinese bourgeoisie was not an organic whole but a mechanical compound of strata, groups, and groupings with diverse genetical, typological, localistic, corporative, juridical, and other features. The concept 'class' may be applied to it only reservedly. The Chinese bourgeoisie as a class was still in its early formative stage.

The strength and effectiveness of the joint entrepreneurial assault on the foreign sector and the Qing government derived not from the potential of the bourgeoisie as such, but from the mass of *shenshi*, a non-bourgeois element drawn into patriotic campaigns and the liberal constitutionalist movement. These latter, the influence they wielded, made up for the weakness of the bourgeois-landlord opposition; they also acted as the vehicle of the demands of the bourgeoisie which, moreover, had no political party of its own.

To make headway, the bourgeois elements had to do away with the obstacles presented by the surviving bureaucratic tenant-farming feudalism in agriculture, with the country's status of semi-colony, and with the arbitrary rule and continuous restrictions imposed by the Qing regime in its efforts to conserve traditional political and economic institutions. Everything that held down the development of private enterprise remained unchanged—the *liqin*, the state monopolies, the high taxes, the abuses and arbitrary acts of the authorities, and the absence of an integral budget, of an integral monetary system, and a single system of weights and measures. More, some taxes affecting the bourgeoisie and the traders had been raised under the New Policy. The taxation policy of the Qing was, indeed, the

bone of contention, for it centred on commercial and industrial levies and retarded growth of private enterprise and the process of accumulation—the amassment of money in the hands of the bourgeois strata. The various internal and transit duties, and most of all the *liqin*, which kept increasing all the time, were especially ruinous. Bourgeois and *shenshi* quarters were incensed by the defeatist foreign policies, especially foreign trade policies, of the Qing court. Having become financially and politically dependent on the imperialist powers, the government was making concession after concession to foreigners to the detriment of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The contradictions were made more acute by the economic recession that began in 1909, adding to the discontent of the Chinese bourgeois strata. Private investments in modern industry dropped to less than a third of what they were in 1905-1908. The industrial decline reached an especially low point in 1911, when it was compounded with the acute financial crisis of 1910-1911 that followed the panic on Shanghai's stock exchange after a drastic drop in the value of rubber shares. The Zhejiang financial group suffered severe losses. A wave of bankruptcies swept across the merchant, industrial, and financial quarters of Shanghai, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Hankou, Tianjin, and other large cities. In Shanghai alone, half the money-changers closed their shops.

And in this tense atmosphere, in 1911, the Qing regime issued a government decree 'nationalising' the Huguang railways for which the bourgeoisie and landlords of Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, and Sichuan had held public collections of funds and in which they invested millions of *yuan*. More, here and there construction of these railways had already begun. And in this situation, the rights to build the Huguang lines were suddenly being transferred to foreign banks. This body blow to the interests of the bourgeois *shenshi* and landlord quarters of South China detonated mass protests and disorders. In Sichuan, the disaffection grew over into an insurrection, the prologue to the bourgeois revolution of 1911-1913.

The factors that paved the way to and precipitated the revolution were the result of intricate economic, social, and political changes wrought by the internationalisation of China's economy, the semi-colonial status to which it was reduced, and the development of national capitalism. These changes had given strong impulse to the emergence within the old society of a transitional socio-economic structure, accompanied with an aggravation of the situation of crisis, which acquired new features.

The emergence of the transitional society had taken more than half a century—from the opium wars to the Xinhai bourgeois revolution, which culminated in certain modifications of the superstructure. In 1911-1913, the erosion of the old-time social and economic

system was decidedly acute. Some components of the bureaucratic tenant-farming system were demolished, some were undermined, some were transformed, while some remained unchanged. Isolation from the outside world, for example, gave place to internationalisation of economic ties. Importation of machinery ended the technical stagnation and brought about a partial modernisation of industry. Relative economic 'homogeneity' gave place to variety of modes of production. The once drowsy economic scene was upset by the capitalist cycle of successive booms and recessions. The medieval priority of a more or less uniform subsistence economy was gradually giving ground to a diversity of marketing patterns. The former fusion of farming and home crafts was in many ways disrupted. The stable advantage that farming had over urban crafts in the matter of labour productivity was either vanishing or was balanced out. The economic and structural similarity of town and country began to give place to dissimilarity. The urban lag behind the countryside was over.

The town was gradually forging ahead. The town's subordination to the traditional or, more precisely, 'rural' bureaucratic tenant-farming system was receding into the past. The economic and social upsurge was taking Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou, Tangshan, Guangzhou, and other cities into a new era. They began dropping out of the old medieval structure. This served notice of the crisis gripping the traditional arrangements despite the fact that most of the prefectural and county centres were still under the sway of the former 'rural' system. The old rejection by the Confucian society of the entrepreneurial principle was flouted by the emergence and growth of the capitalist mode of production. The previous feudalistic regularity of economic and social processes was succeeded by the instability that is typical of the transitional period.

The traditional society's mechanism of self-rehabilitation broke down. This, too, was an element of the crisis, for as a result the former hierarchic trammels of the system of estates began to fall away. The conventional nature of that system, quite different from the European, only hastened its collapse. The old hierarchy of four estates (*simin*)—the learned (*shenshi*, *shi*), the tillers (*nong*), the artisans (*gong*), and the merchants (*shang*)—was swiftly disintegrating. New social-class formations were rising in its stead. The correspondence of the basis and superstructure, especially its upper echelons, which had prevailed for many centuries, was wrenched out of gear.

The old system's complete or partial loss of its positions created a specific evolutionary situation in China at the early 20th century: the traditional levers of self-rehabilitation that had secured the normal functioning of the old system had begun to malfunction. This loss of the traditional balance and violation of the medieval

system of Confucian norms are traceable first of all to China's having been drawn into the world market and to its 'importation' of modern forms of capitalism. Though an alien element on the body of China, the foreign sector of the early 20th century had in a way turned into an organic, albeit obviously anti-traditional, part of China's changing social-economic structure. Gradually, the foreign sector began to overcome the incompatibility that had bred the institution of compradores, and changed from an external into an internal factor. This gave momentum to its constructive influence, spurring growth of the old, 'grassroot', primitive native entrepreneurship, on the one hand, and the emergence of elements of a new, 'elite', developed capitalism, on the other. All this tore the fabric of the Chinese society's medieval integrity, the 'purity' of its Confucian pattern, and acted as one of the destructive factors of the outside influence.

China's evolution in the early 20th century, its individual stages, proceeded as an outgrowth of the 'metropolis-colony' relationship in which China was a semi-colony. This link, plus the capitalist set-up within the country, gradually imparted a new content to the traditional social-economic structures. Wage labour in agriculture, for example, evolutionised partly in the capitalist direction. While some old forms of exploitation (e.g., the institution of farm-labourers), survived, hire, especially hire of seasonal workers and day labourers, took on more and more of an entrepreneurial complexion. Sharecropping, serfdom, bond service, forestalling, the old-style lease of land owned by bourgeoisified landlords, and commercial activity by the traditional type of landlords—these elements were acquiring the characteristics of the transitional stage, and spoke clearly enough of the transitional nature of the economic system in the Chinese countryside. Part of the old merchantdom and its customary transactions, too, acquired bourgeois and transitional features. The gradual transformation of the guild merchants into a modern commercial bourgeoisie became an element spurring the emergence of a mixed social system.

The effect of these intrinsic changes in the basis, coupled with the external influences, led to a qualitatively different society. Though much of the bureaucratic tenant-farming system survived, a concealed slow and contradictory transformation was taking place within it. The transitional nature of society at that time is admitted, among other things, in the formula 'semi-feudal, semi-colonial China', which reflects new qualities acquired by the Qing society unknown before the opium wars. The term 'feudalism' is no longer wholly adequate to depict the decades before and, especially, after the Xinhai revolution. Since China of the early 20th century possessed a set of non-traditional phenomena, and since its development along medieval lines was interrupted and had given place if not to progress

then at least to a process of change, feudalism was in a state of crisis. There was a gradual decline and decay of the reduced and dislocated traditional structures, on the one hand, and a slow but sure modernisation of society, on the other, accompanied with the emergence and growth of new social strata and new economic forms. Furthermore, there appeared intermediate transitional phenomena. All three components—the old, the new, and the transitional—were in clear evidence in the field of wage labour. The old bond service survived in agriculture for part of the labourers (*changgong*), in manual industries for the 'dead hands', hands that had 'sold themselves' (*sigong*, *sibozha*, and *maishengong*), and in capitalistic factories for contracted child labour (*baoshengong*). The semi-servitude of labourers working off a debt, and the labour of journeymen hired individually or in groups through a headman (*waigong*, *baogong*) fell into a pattern of hire that was close to capitalist hire. Free entrepreneurial hire accounted for the bulk of seasonal workers (*manggong*) and day labourers (*duangong*), in the countryside, for so-called living hands (*huogong*, *hobozha*) in the crafts, and in the factories for workers hired directly by the administration (*ligong*).

The transitional element was a compound of the traditional and the new, but chiefly a specific though extremely vague development. By 1911, this gave birth to a 'three-layered' structure (new, intermediate, and old economic and social phenomena) with a large variety of social types ranging from slave (*nupu*), serf (*zhuangding*), and landlord to proletarian and bourgeois. But this 'three-layered' structure was not determinative. The determining factor was the organic bond of the intermediate element with the 'lower' traditional pattern, and its obvious remoteness from the 'upper' modern layer. This vertical break-up put in question the systemic unity of the whole, artificially transformed, structure. For that structure consisted of two fundamentally distinct entities—the thick layer of traditional economy, and a thin coating of capitalist enterprise—the two being opposed to one another and alienated in industry, transport, as well as finance. The grip of the old economy had been loosened only slightly owing to the specificity of Chinese rural patterns and, especially, the everlasting factors that cemented them—the demographic and the geographic.

Once it had been forcibly drawn out of its isolation and into the general stream of world development, China's bureaucratic tenant-farming feudalism became historically unviable both as a stage and as a system, but remained an existing entity. The traditional combination of tenant farming and massive bureaucratic appropriation of the surplus product in the shape of rents and taxes continued to be basic after 1912 as well. But though they retained physical and structural supremacy, the old patterns lost for good their ability of

stage-by-stage development, and also their historical perspective. The capitalist mode of production plus the transitional forms turned the Qing Empire of the early 20th century into a society in which the transitional stage gained special relevance. It is therefore safe to say that it was a transitional society that was undergoing the whole range of changes, including partial capitalistic evolution.

The cardinal result of the changes in the basis that occurred in the latter half of the 19th and in the early 20th century was not the emergence of the capitalist mode of production as such, but the entire sum of transitional phenomena and the emergence of a mixed social-economic structure. This latter, indeed, was what determined the general nature of the transformation of Chinese society before the 1914-1919 period. As for the capitalist mode of production, it acted chiefly as a spur in the formation of this transitional society with its tendency of self-inflation and of consolidating primarily intermediate patterns. This made the transition not only a process, but also a relatively stable and prolonged condition.

The more or less uniform type of reproduction broke down into several patterns: feudal cum patriarchal (chiefly in the non-Han areas), subsistence farming, small-scale cash cropping, and capitalist production in two sectors—a national one where small-scale enterprise predominated, and a foreign one. This diversity of patterns extended the sphere of circulation, because the exchange between them and between the sectors tended to grow. The multiplicity of types of urban economy increased visibly. Rural society shed its former integrity as small-scale cash cropping and proto-capitalist and transitional patterns expanded. Hence the diversity of social groups and strata—the dominant old and the new, recent additions. By 1911-1912, kulak farms engaged in crafts and growing cash crops appeared within the system of subsistence farming alongside prosperous peasant farms of the old type. Within the framework of both subsistence farming and small-scale cash cropping, medium-sized farms neighboured on poor semi-proletarian farms whose owners worked for wages to make ends meet. Poor tenants, even paupers, rubbed shoulders with the proletarian stratum that earned a livelihood by selling its labour power.

With peasants turning into cash croppers, the Chinese countryside began to breed poverty and pauperism, and, indeed, many other consequences of the initial capitalist development, which proceeded most ununiformly and not in all provinces. On the other hand, the primitive point of departure and the low rate of capitalist growth in agriculture only stressed the fact that it was no more than one of the elements of the transitional diversity of modes of production. This was one of the indicators, if not the basic one, that the traditional type of economy had completed its cycle and could not develop any more.

Capitalism during these years came forth not as a determinative factor but merely as a component of the transitional society. It was this that made for its actual role in the multistructural social and economic make-up of the Qing Empire on the eve of the Xinhai revolution. The intricate inner structure of the capitalist mode of production suggests that we should consider it, too, as an entity in the diversity of patterns. While its upper echelons represented modern enterprise, the 'massive' grassroot elements belonged in still many ways to 'medieval capitalism' with its specific trading patterns and usury. In other words, China of the early 20th century witnessed the emergence of what we might call 'two capitalisms'—one new, the other old. One was being implanted from above through the importation of developed forms, while the other was rising from below, from earlier patterns of spontaneous origin. Accordingly, there also appeared 'two bourgeoisies'—the elite and the lower strata—which were functionally nearly unrelated, and often had divergent interests.

The national and the imported 'capitalisms' developed each in its own way, and had very few points of contact. Hence the slow transformation of the lower forms of capital and the surfeit of funds in the channels of circulation and the sphere of traditional finance—something that is typical of the early stages of initial accumulation. In the circumstances, the early bourgeois forms were more closely related to the traditional economy than to the modern. The artificial implantation and the elitist nature of the modern economy widened the gap between the traditional and the bourgeois, and also between the early capitalist and the large-scale capitalist. As a result the primitive lower forms of capitalism acted rather as a purely intermediate than an organic, cementing link. Capitalism existed, as it were, in two dimensions—the old and the new—as a side-product of the traditional complex, and as a component of the bourgeois pattern.

The early forms of capitalism, whose development had been blocked by the traditional Confucian system until the mid-19th century, had no future. Under the impact of external factors, however, they gained the ability for spontaneous growth and ascendant development following three centuries (the 16th to the 18th) of relative stagnation. Proto-manufacturing gave way to manufacturing, on the one hand, and the latter assumed its place in the structure of the emergent capitalist mode of production, on the other. At the same time, the influence of the old economy gave rise to a reverse tendency: the self-restoration, conservation, and inflation of backward elements of this low-grade capitalism—a 'dirty' capitalism as compared with the purity of the new, mature forms.

Elements of rural capitalism were represented by warped lower forms, which also included the many-faced stratum of landlords

turned bourgeois. This stratum was the social equivalent of the most backward, the most perverse, and the most unpromising type of capitalist evolution. Yet it was the country's most massive bourgeois potential, though a potential lacking progressive impulse.

The complexity of the inner structure of the capitalist mode in China was not confined to the existence of a vertical gap. From the period of 'self-strengthening' local capitalism inherited the *Gründer* [founder] spirit of the officialdom, a promotion fever, and also the tie-up with the state in the shape of a variety of mixed state-and-private forms of enterprise (*guandu shangban*, *guanshang heban*).* This influential entity, a kind of 'bureaucratic capitalism', predetermined in part the elitist and reactionary direction of the country's capitalistic development. The general social, economic, and political climate in the Qing Empire at the turn of the century had paved the way precisely for the 'conservative' and 'landlord' rather than the 'democratic' and 'progressive' option. Besides, the prevailing climate was affected by external deformations typical of the country's dependent, semi-colonial condition with the typical foreign sector in its economy. This moderated the outlook of China's capitalist development, for the multiplicity of economic patterns, sectors, and forms posed the question of the ultimate aim of evolution and of the means of securing it. The clash between the spontaneous and 'deliberate' options of modernisation had begun in the 1860s with the 'self-strengthening' doctrine. By 1911-1913, the spontaneous, basis option, which developed with no active involvement of the superstructure, had taken the upper hand. Yet the huge mass of small-scale proto-capitalist industry and its spontaneous growth at a rate higher than that of capitalist development, denied historical promise to any spontaneous capitalist reconstruction of society from below. The demographic factor tended to 'devour' the achievements of the new mode of production and of the country as a whole. In general historical terms, therefore, despite the higher productivity of labour of the capitalist mode of production, this 'natural' variant led to a dead end in the light of the internal factors.

The lack of promise was in some ways akin to that of the spontaneous development of 'medieval capitalism' in 17th, 18th, and pre-opium war 19th-century China, held down as it was by the power of the traditional system and the hostility of the superstructure. Without the support of the state, the bourgeois system of the early 20th century had as little chance to become a structure-forming factor as the 'medieval capitalism' of the mid-19th century had to advance manufacturing or to grow into a system in its own right.

* *Guandu shangban*—private enterprise controlled by the treasury; *guanshang heban*—joint enterprise of the treasury and private capitalists.

And the disparity of the 'two capitalisms' was a contributing factor to this lack of perspective. Neither the upper nor the lower components of the new mode of production could by themselves act as the formative element of a new socio-economic system. Nor could either of them subordinate the other in order to become the leading or at least an actively transforming force. The capitalism of those years could not integrate the transitional society, because it could not even integrate itself. This state of affairs only conserved the prevailing transitional situation.

The illusory bourgeois nature of the evolution merely emphasised the indeterminate quality of the 'option'. As a result, China found itself in a complicated and contradictory condition, the condition of a society 'at the crossroads'. The 'supra-national' nature of the systemic crisis, too, contributed to the drawn-out nature of the 'option', because not all things depended on China itself. This would not have been so had the crisis matured naturally, spontaneously, as it would if there were a definite inner alternative. More than any other factor, it was the force applied to China from outside that created the variety of options.

The heightened role of the external factor and the considerable element of force (imperialist expansion) that affected the transformation of society at the time of the Qing was the main reason for its lack of balance and cohesion. The coexistence of the 'traditional' and 'modern' in the economy and the social system of the Qing Empire reposed on their functional inter-connection through transitional as well as other forms. But it also saw clashes between them. The gap between the one and the other was quite substantial on a number of planes, like that of agriculture—industry, town—countryside, interior provinces—seaboard, and so on. The new had gained some ground in industry, in the towns, and along the seaboard, while the old continued to grip agriculture, the rural areas, and the interior regions. This set-up was aggravated by the surviving economic dissociation of provinces, by the traditional regionalism, and the forces that had affected China for centuries, such as the gigantic geographic and demographic scale of the country. The latter operated as a contributing factor to the temporary break in evolution. As a result, the provinces, even regions within provinces, were at different levels of development. This applied to urban as well as rural society in various parts of China on the eve of the Xinhai revolution.

Being a transitional society, pre-Xinhai China witnessed not a merely mechanical insinuation of alien elements into the traditional Confucian fabric, but also a substantial mutual adaptation of these elements and the traditional fabric, giving rise to a specific system with its own principles and intrinsic factors of self-development

within the single framework formed by China and the world market. This does not mean, however, that the Qing Empire of the early 20th century should be seen as a sum of diverse entities: foreign sector and national economy, feudal complex and bourgeois patterns, old-time village and modern town. Its social and economic development proceeded in what were two loosely associated spheres. One encompassed the proto-capitalist forms and the early capitalist economic patterns that grew out of them, and the other the complex of full-grown capitalism.

The social structure followed the same principle in its transformation, with a certain lack of cohesion within the new classes. By 1914, Chinese society had largely thrown off the trammels imposed by the system of medieval estates. Out of the two peculiar dominant estates, the *qiren** and the *shenshi*, the former and uppermost had been wiped out by the Xinhai revolution. The growth of the latter had ceased with the abolition of the traditional civil service examinations in 1905. Though slowly, its influence had begun to sink with the establishment of the 'new' schools in 1901, with the growth of a modern intelligentsia, and with the military men from other estates gaining prominence following the 1911-1913 revolution, which reduced the weight of civilian officials, the *shenshi*. Besides, the old *shi* estate itself had in part turned bourgeois. The changes in the basis at the turn of the century had played havoc with the medieval pyramid of specifically Chinese estates. The *shenshi*'s traditionally Confucian contempt of enterprise gave way to active business pursuits, bringing the 'literati' element closer to the merchants. Indeed, the first decade of the 20th century, abounding as it did in economic and political movements, saw the emergence of a kind of symbiosis of *shenshi* and traders (*shenshang*). The omnipotence of medieval 'learnedness' was gradually and unnoticeably yielding ground to the influence of money and wealth. With the growth of large cities and the development of enterprise, former notions bred by the system of estates receded to the background. New social groups were springing up alongside the old and transitional ones on the basis of each of the expiring estates. Above the crumbling system of estates, as it were, there emerged the entirely new 'anti-Confucian' class of bourgeois capitalists, and the working class, and alongside these the modern intelligentsia. They still bore the marks of their traditional 'proto-class' milieu (proto-bourgeoisie, proto-proletariat) and of the more specific groups from which they came: traders, artisans, peasants, and *shenshi*.

The vagueness of China's transitional social structure of the early

* *Qiren*—the uppermost estate of bannermen, consisting of Manchus, and of Mongols and Chinese (*hanjun*) attached to the banners or corps by hereditary law.

20th century was due to three things: the medieval social entities common for any pre-bourgeois society, the new classes in an early formative stage, and the profusion of intermediate links marked by an erosion of distinctions between some of the traditional 'classes' such as those between landlords and peasants. Furthermore, the social crisis of the early 20th century had inherited from the old society the mass of paupers in town and countryside, whose large numbers were a specific feature of old-time, traditional China. In the new conditions of the 20th century an additional impulse appeared for the growth of pauperism. The 'pauper' variant predominated in the break-up of the peasantry over the proletarianisation that had begun in the framework of the multi-structural economy. In the cities, the working class was dwarfed by the mass of *declassé* elements—porters, dockhands, coolies, junk haulers, beggars, and unemployed. Also typical of the transitional structure was the large percentage of intermediate petty-bourgeois elements—traders and street-vendors, guild artisans and craftsmen—whose numbers were tending to rise.

The formative period of the transitional stage may be said to have ended with the Xinhai revolution of 1911-1913. That was when China became an organic part of the world capitalist system. The country's reduction to the state of a semi-colony of the imperialist powers and the evolution of local capitalism led to the emergence of intermediate economic forms and transitional social groups. But in the final analysis these were not tokens of any impending bourgeois option, nor even of a crisis of feudalism in its classic form. The transition created a knot of disruptive and painful contradictions. And neither local nor world capitalism was able to resolve them, because it was their source and component. In the Qing Empire the capitalist mode of production acted, in essence, as a disintegrating and destructive factor. It was a parasite that lived off the old Chinese ways, off the traditional structures, and had the reverse effect of crippling them. Yet in the early 20th century their deformation failed to bring about a fundamentally new, dynamic society. It was an internally fragmented and at once an externally dependent society. Many of the developments of the transitional period were far more a 'defensive reaction', a means of survival and adaptation of traditional patterns to new conditions, rather than effective steps towards capitalism. This spoke of the enhanced stability and great regenerative powers of the old bureaucratic tenant-farming structure.

Still, in the early 20th century many key elements of that structure were reduced to a state of crisis. The traditional alignment of economic and political arrangements was thrown out of gear on the eve of the Xinhai revolution. Gone forever was their correspondence to one another, and hence the stability that had obtained for many

many centuries. The artificially imposed change of system caused a set of painful social modifications, with tens of millions of people having to contend with changing and unfamiliar conditions. The critical developments of transitional stage in the ten years before the Xinhai revolution bred social instability, along with mass movements that hastened the Xinhai revolution, that is, the first of the civil wars that provided the setting for China's fight against the malaise of transition and its difficult choice of the way to the future.

In the critical pre-revolutionary situation of the early 20th century, the choice of economic policy depended on whether the administrative structures would regain their viability. The Xinhai revolution, its victory, and the downfall of the Qing monarchy in 1912, were natural and inevitable. The changes in the basis at the turn of the century paved the way to the success of the revolution and to the country's political regeneration that followed. In the mid-19th century the Taiping Rebellion involved titanic effort and tremendous human sacrifice for what turned out to be an abortive attempt at overthrowing the Qing dynasty, whereas in 1911-1912 two local uprisings, in Sichuan and Wuchang, triggered a chain reaction that led to the fairly easy, mostly bloodless, overthrow of Manchu rule in one province after another. The conflict between the mixed social-economic structure and the superstructure was overcome to a certain extent and for a certain time, though the new equilibrium, as the period of rule by the Beiyang clique showed, was uncertain and precarious.

Chapter 16

THE XINHAI REVOLUTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1911-1913

In 1911, the outspokenly reactionary policies of the Qing government and the mounting aggressive pressures of the imperialist powers brought the political situation in China to boiling point.

By the summer, it was clear that the Manchu court was not going to honour the demands of the liberal bourgeois-landlord opposition. Worse still, under guise of establishing certain 'constitutional' institutions, the ruling Manchu clique was in the act of concentrating all military, political, and economic power in its own hands. In May, the throne issued a prescript, forming a cabinet of ministers who were nearly all Manchus and members of the imperial family. By so doing, the Qing reduced their own social power base, repelling the Chinese liberal bourgeoisie and losing the support of a large number of Chinese landlords and bureaucrats.

The Wuchang Uprising

The anti-government and anti-foreign movement that unfolded in the summer of 1911 against the 'nationalisation' of railways that were already under construction and their transfer to the control of the imperialist powers raised the tension on the country's political scene, and widened the abyss that lay between the Manchu clique and Chinese society. In September, a rising in Sichuan stimulated the revolutionary mood of the people and acted as the detonator of a revolutionary explosion in Wuchang.

In the forefront of the anti-Manchu movement stood the revolutionary organisations of Hubei province, backed by patriots in neighbouring Hunan with whom they maintained close contacts.

Following the defeat of the Unity League uprising in Guangzhou, leaders of the Universal Progress League passed a resolution saying that the initiative of a new rising that would touch off the revolution

in the country had to come from the Hubei-Hunan revolutionary centre.

Negotiations of a merger between the Universal Progress League and the Literary Society, the two revolutionary organisations in Hubei, began in early May 1911. Though the two would not unite organisationally, they decided to pool efforts in preparing an uprising.

Most members of the Literary Society and the Universal Progress League were New Army soldiers. Among them were junior officers, chiefly those who had joined the revolutionary movement as privates, and had later won promotion. Neither organisation had any senior officers among its members. This social background of the membership explains the consistently revolutionary stand of the two organisations, and their determination to start an anti-Manchu rising and thereby attain their goals. Their leaders managed to ensure the necessary degree of clandestinity, to keep their activity secret from the military command and the authorities.

The army revolutionaries had their own military organisation, with ten men forming a section, three sections a platoon and three platoons a company. These secret units were headed by special commanders directly subordinated to the leaders of the Literary Society and the Universal Progress League. On the eve of the Wuchang uprising the two organisations had some 5,000 men on their rolls, or roughly one-third of the New Army complement in Hubei.¹

In early September, on orders from Beijing five New Army battalions quartered in Hubei were despatched to Sichuan to put down the popular rising in that province. The departure of the troops, including a large number of members of the revolutionary organisations, seriously disturbed the leaders of the planned revolutionary action in Wuchang. At a joint conference on 14 September, Sun Wu said the responsibility for the revolution lay on both organisations, and that the rising would not succeed unless they concerted their efforts. It was resolved to speedily set up a joint revolutionary headquarters. The conference also decided to send Ju Zheng and Yang Yuru to Shanghai to request leaders of the Unity League to come to Wuhan and assume the over-all direction of the uprising.

On 17 September, the messengers of the Hubei revolutionaries arrived in the port city and met Song Jiaoren, Tan Renfeng, Chen Qimei, and other top leaders of the Unity League. The latter were closely briefed on the situation in Hubei and told of the intention to start a rising in Wuhan without further delay. But the Unity League leaders were critical. They maintained that the rising should start simultaneously in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Wuhan. Huang Xing, who was in Hong Kong at the time, thought that since the revolutionaries lacked funds to buy enough arms, the rising in Hubei should be postponed.²

On 24 September, since no one of the Unity League had turned up, the leaders of the Literary Society and the Universal Progress League gathered by themselves to give the final touches to the plan of the rising, and elect its command. The conference, attended by 60 persons including representatives of regiments, battalions, and companies, resolved to start the rising on 6 October. The signal would be a fire laid on the bank of the Yangzi in Wuchang. The 8th battalion of engineers would capture the arsenal on Chuwangtai hill, and the city's South Gate. Other units of the 8th division and the 21st mixed brigade would thereupon come out in support.

Jiang Yiwu, chairman of the Literary Society, was elected commander-in-chief of the revolutionary forces, and Sun Wu was made chief-of-staff. A political and a military committee were formed to complete the preparations. Jiao Dafeng, who was in Hunan, was informed of the day of the rising by telegram. The conference also drew up a list of members of the government that would be formed if the rising succeeded. The most active of the leaders of the two organisations were picked for the top posts, but the office of the head of the military government of Hubei (*dudu*) was left vacant. This was a premeditated move. Possible nominations to the post had been discussed back in April 1911, and after a long debate a decision was hammered out that the commander of the 21st mixed brigade, General Li Yuanhong, was the most suitable candidate. As the Hubei revolutionaries saw it, his involvement would raise the prestige of the rebel army, and thereby help it to overthrow the Manchu monarchy.³

The date of the rising, 6 October, came to the knowledge of the Beijing government through foreign missionaries and diplomats. The Manchu Rui Cheng, viceroy of Hubei and Hunan, was immediately informed. The Manchu authorities in Wuchang had been on their guard even before the warning came. A spontaneous mutiny of artillerymen had broken out in the area of Lake Nanhu near Wuchang on 24 September: the men, who were in a revolutionary frame of mind, refused to obey their officers. The mutiny and word from the Qing government of the impending revolutionary rising in Wuchang persuaded Rui Cheng to declare a state of siege. He ordered the chief of the garrison, Zhang Biao, a Manchu, who was in command of the 8th division, to set up a special headquarters for suppression of the rising should it break out. In the circumstances, the revolutionary leaders decided to put off the rising to 16 October.

On 9 October, however, the timing of the rising was taken out of their hands. That day, at a hideout in the Russian concession of Hankou, Sun Wu inadvertently detonated a hand-grenade. He was injured in the arm and face. Li Zuodong, who was with him, led him through the backdoor to a hospital in the German concession. The

noise of the explosion attracted the attention of policemen. They searched the premises and found arms, money, flags, seals, and documents. The Chinese authorities launched wholesale arrests. Among the first to be arrested was Liu Tong, brother of one of the leaders of the Universal Progress League, Liu Gong. Under questioning, Liu Tong informed the authorities of the existence of the revolutionary organisations and of the whereabouts of their headquarters. The Hubei revolutionaries were thus driven to extremity. There had to be an immediate armed rising. The alternative was imprisonment or execution. Sun Wu let Jiang Yiwu and other leaders of the Literary Society know through Deng Yulin that in his opinion the rising had to start immediately. Crossing the river to Wuchang, Deng Yulin conferred with Jiang Yiwu and Liu Yaocheng, and finalised the plan of the rising. The first to act would be the artillerymen outside the city, near Lake Nanhu. The order signed by rebel commander-in-chief Jiang Yiwu said the revolutionary army was going into action to expel the Manchus and to restore the Chinese in power. The revolutionary army was to maintain the strictest discipline, and to do no harm to its countrymen and to foreign subjects. After capturing power in the city, the rebels were to gather in the square outside the building of the Hubei provincial consultative assembly.

But the rising was not fated to start that day. The authorities paralysed the planned action. After dark on 9 October, the police broke into the premises of the Literary Society and arrested Liu Yaocheng, Peng Chufan, and Yang Hongsheng. Jiang Yiwu managed to escape.

At dawn on 10 October, the prisoners were summarily executed beside the gate to the viceroy's residence. Rui Cheng issued an order forbidding movement in and out of the city. Soldiers were confined to barracks. Squads of police and gendarmes engaged in wholesale searches and arrests. But word of the execution of the three patriots and rumours that the authorities had come into possession of papers listing the names of revolutionaries spread swiftly across Wuchang. They also reached the soldiers of the 8th battalion of engineers, most of whom were members of the Universal Progress League.

In the afternoon of 10 October, Sergeant Xiong Bingkun of the 8th battalion managed to contact the men of the 23rd and 30th regiments and come to terms with them that the rising would start in the evening of the same day. The first to act would be the 8th battalion. At roll-call, platoon commander Tao Qisheng noticed that Sergeant Jin Zhaolong and private Cheng Zhengying were cleaning their weapons, and, snatching the rifle out of Jin Zhaolong's hands, struck him. Cheng Zhengying, who stood nearby, hit the platoon commander over the head with the butt of his rifle, and thereupon took aim and fired. Panic broke out. Sergeant Xiong Bingkun and a

group of soldiers rushed into the barracks and called on the men to mutiny. The officers who interfered were slain on the spot. The rest fled. The soldiers, headed by Xiong Bingkun, set out for the arsenal on Chuwangtai hill.

The guards of the arsenal were from the 8th company of engineers. Their commanding officer, Wu Zhaolin, had fled on hearing shots in the distance. The men took the side of the rebels. Capture of the arsenal was half the battle won. There were now dozens of field pieces, thousands of rifles, and a few million cartridges in the rebels' hands.⁴ This was important for the way matters turned out that day, 10 October, and for the subsequent fighting against government troops at Hankou and Hanyang. The 29th and 30th infantry regiments were true to their word and joined the rebels. So did the military trainees of the topographic school. The artillerymen quartered at Nanhu did not hesitate either. An artillery unit of 12 guns entered the city.

The rebels, who had broken up into several detachments, launched an attack from Chuwangtai hill on the residence of the viceroy and the headquarters of the 8th division. This was before the arrival of the artillery unit, and the assault failed, because the opposing force was much superior numerically: the viceroy's guard consisted of 3,000 men and officers, and included a machine-gun company, a squadron of cavalry, and sailors of the Yangzi flotilla. A contributing factor to the initial setback of the revolutionary force was lack of co-ordination between the rebel detachments and absence of a centralised command: Jiang Yiwu was still in hiding.

In the meantime, revolutionary patrols guarding the Chuwangtai arsenal discovered company commander Wu Zhaolin, who was hiding in the bushes, and brought him under guard before Xiong Bingkun. The soldiers knew that Wu Zhaolin had sympathy for the revolutionary cause (for he had once been a member of the Rizhihui), and offered him to take command of the rebel troops. At first Wu declined, but was then forced to submit to the soldiers' unanimous request. Shortly before midnight he ordered another attack on the viceroy's residence and the divisional headquarters. Heavy fighting broke out at the approaches to the two objectives and at other important points in the city. The ranks of the attackers swelled. Revolutionary soldiers and officers of other regiments hastened to their aid.⁵ By dawn on 11 October the viceroy's residence, the divisional headquarters, the central police station, the treasury, and other government buildings, were securely in the hands of the rebels. They were in control of the entire city. Rui Cheng, 8th division commander Zhang Biao, and other high-ranking Manchu officials, had taken to their heels.

In the morning of 11 October, word of the overthrow of the

Manchu authorities in Wuchang reached Hankou and Hanyang. Local members of the Literary Society mounted an action in support of the uprising. In the early morning of 12 October, the Hankou garrison rebelled and captured the city. The Manchu authorities were also driven out of Hanyang. The Hanyang munitions plant, one of the biggest in China, fell without a fight into the hands of the revolutionaries, who were backed by its workers. In this way, as a result of a soldiers' mutiny, Wuhan, the group of three Han cities in Central China—Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang—had shaken off Manchu rule. It became the chief base of the revolution.

In the morning of the 11th, the leaders of the rising had gathered in the building of the Hubei provincial consultative assembly in Wuchang to form a revolutionary provisional military government. They were reluctant, however, to form it on their own. Local liberal constitutionalists and high-ranking Chinese officials who had remained in the city were invited to help them. After repeated invitations, the chairman of the Hubei provincial consultative assembly Tang Hualong, other members of the assembly, senior magistrate Ma Jizhang, chief of Wuchang prefecture Zhao Yunan, and various other local officials and *shenshi* finally arrived.

The assembly opened at midday. An active part in it was now played by local liberal constitutionalists headed by Tang Hualong. Tang was the scion of an old merchant family. His father had traded extensively in Wuhan, Jiujiang, Anqing, and other Yangzi valley cities. In 1902, Tang Hualong gained the academic degree of *juren*, and soon thereafter that of *jinshi*, had held official office in the Board of Rites in Beijing, and had then gone to Japan to study law. In 1909, he had returned to China, and on the recommendation of the Huguang viceroy was made member of the preparatory commission forming the Hubei provincial consultative assembly. His close ties with members of the top Wuhan bourgeoisie led him to become a leader of the Hubei liberals and, indeed, a prominent figure in the Chinese constitutionalist movement. He was one of the leading lights of the Society of Friends of the Constitution (Xianyouhui), the countrywide political organisation of the constitutionalists formed in Beijing in the summer of 1911. Disgust with the throne's refusal to honour the liberals' demand of a constitution and parliament without further delay, prompted Tang and his followers to finally accept the invitation and range themselves with the anti-Manchu revolutionary camp.

In his speech at the assembly, Tang swore loyalty to the revolution, but in the same breath warned of the difficulties ahead, and of the strength of the Qing court. He gave to understand that the revolution would not succeed without the backing of the constitutionalist movement.

The first thing the Wuchang assembly had to do was to elect the head of the provincial military government. It decided on Li Yuanhong. Tang was appointed minister for civil affairs, and accepted the post gladly. As for Li Yuanhong, he adamantly refused to serve the revolution despite threats that he would then be shot on the spot. All the same, it was decided to keep him under guard in the consultative assembly building until he finally relented. By picking Li and Tang for the two most responsible posts in the revolutionary government, the leaders of the uprising formed a direct alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie and the Chinese landlords.

Since Li stood firm and refused to accept the duties of head of the provisional government, the revolutionaries formed a Bureau of Strategy (*Mouluechu*) to handle practical matters. The Bureau, consisting of the more prominent participants in the rising, was, in effect, a revolutionary military committee that dealt with all important and urgent political and military matters. After dark on 11 October, for example, it made the following historic decisions: 1) to proclaim China a republic; to abolish dating by the years of rule of Manchu emperors, and to consider the 3rd year of the Xuantong era (1911) the 4609th year since the birth of Huangdi, the legendary Chinese emperor; 2) to publish a manifesto declaring war to the finish on the Qing government and calling on the rest of the provinces to revolt; 3) to issue all proclamations and send all telegrams over the name of Li Yuanhong, and to call him head of the new government; 4) to constitute the Hubei military government of three ministries—civil affairs, military affairs, and foreign affairs—and form a military headquarters.

On 12 October, the Bureau of Strategy appointed Sun Wu minister of military affairs, and Hu Ying, who had just been released from prison, minister of foreign affairs. An officer who had served with Li Yuanhong, named Yang Kaijia, whose thoughts were as far away from revolution as those of Li himself, was made chief-of-staff.

On 13 October, the new Wuchang authorities began recruiting men for the revolutionary army. The working people of Wuhan and the adjoining counties responded to the call with enthusiasm. Workers, peasants, students, and former soldiers joined up readily. The stream of volunteers was so great that a few days later the revolutionary authorities were compelled to publish an urgent notice closing the recruiting stations. By 18 October, they had five infantry brigades, two artillery and two cavalry regiments, several 'despise death' assault units (*gansidui*), and special details consisting of secondary school students.⁶

Peasant and worker recruits made up the bulk of the revolutionary armed forces. The 5th brigade, for example, under the command of Xiong Bingkun, consisted of miners from Huangshi and peasants

from various Hubei counties. Most of the regular soldiers who had taken part in the rising were now officers or sergeants of the newly formed military units. Along with the small group of officers who sided with the revolution they formed the backbone of the people's army: drilling recruits, maintaining discipline, and explaining the political facts.

Li Yuanhong, kept under guard, followed the events with close attention. He saw that the people were eager to throw off the Manchu yoke. He saw the swift growth of the revolutionary army. The revolutionaries kept at him, urging him again and again to accept the top post in the military government. The liberals, too, needed him, and so did the government officials who had escaped arrest and were eager to take power into their own hands as quickly as possible. It dawned on Li that he would be able to exercise considerable influence on the course of events and render effective aid to the reactionary forces. So, he made his decision, and in an official ceremony in Wuchang on 16 October assumed the duties of head of the Hubei military government.

Once Li took the reins of power, the constitutional monarchists, who had so quickly turned republican, began acting with greater audacity. Li introduced new organisational statutes drawn up by liberals, which abolished the ministries and instituted boards subordinate directly to Li and Tang. As a result, the revolutionaries were removed from effective power. The change in the government structure caused serious objections among many of them. And though they secured a revision of the statutes, the situation in the government was still turning against them. Li, Tang, and other conservative leaders, who had seized the most responsible government offices, occupied themselves with buttressing their position and were steadily elbowing the revolutionaries out of power. Still, with the people's rising growing in scale, they could not strike any deal with the Manchu monarchy.

Overthrow of Manchu Power in Other Provinces

The victorious Wuchang rising in Hubei touched off the 1911-1913 revolution. Within two months of the insurrection, most of the other provinces had thrown off the rule of the Qing dynasty. On 16 October, Yichang, another large city in Hubei, booted out the Manchus. On the 22nd, there were risings in Changsha and Xian, the administrative seats of Hunan and Shenxi provinces. The following day, Jiujiang, an important strategic point on the Yangzi, drove out the Qing authorities, and on 29 October, the Manchus lost their grip

on Shanxi province. Yunnan was cleared of the Manchus on the 31st, and on 1 November, Jiangxi became free too. The Manchus lost Shanghai and Guizhou province on 4 November, Zhejiang on the 5th, Guangxi on the 7th, Anhui on the 8th, Guangdong on the 9th, Fujian on the 11th, Shandong on the 13th, and Sichuan on the 27th. By mid-November, the three North-Eastern provinces (Fengtian, Jilin, and Heilongjiang) repudiated the Beijing authorities, and the revolutionary movement also spread to Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. On 2 December, after bitter fighting, revolutionary troops entered Nanjing. Only three provinces were still under Manchu rule: Hebei, Henan, and Gansu, but there, too, the situation was tense, with anti-Manchu risings erupting now here now there.

This swift success of the struggle is to be traced principally to the fact that a considerable segment of the New Army rose against the Manchus, and acted as the assault force in the initial stage of the revolution.

On 1 July 1911, the New Army of the Qing Empire consisted of 11 divisions and 25 separate mixed brigades. It had 160,000 infantrymen, and 14,000 men in the cavalry, 1,000 artillery pieces, and 130 machine-guns.⁷ Most of the soldiers were young peasants or artisans. Some of them could read and write. The vigorous agitation of the Unity League and other revolutionary organisations bore fruit. The bulk of the men and officers in the New Army units quartered in Central and South China looked with disfavour on the Manchu monarchy.

The Northern (Beiyang) Army founded by Li Hongzhang and reorganised and trained under Yuan Shikai, representing more than a third of the imperial New Army, took no part in the revolution. Quite the contrary. It was the main buttress of Manchu-Chinese reaction, the chief enemy of the revolutionary army. Northern Army commanders loyal to Yuan Shikai were closely associated with the metropolitan officialdom and the landlords in the economically less developed northern provinces. A large section of the rank-and-file were prosperous peasants from Henan province, that is, Yuan Shikai's fellow natives.

As in Hubei, Manchu power in Hunan, Shenxi, Shanxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Zhejiang was deposed by uprisings of New Army troops. But these troops were not strong enough alone to consolidate the victory and topple the Manchu throne. The armed actions of the New Army rebel troops succeeded because they were backed by the mass of the people. As soon as the New Army drove out the old Manchu authorities, leaders of the risings in various provinces began recruiting a revolutionary army. They were aware that the few battalions that had seized the provincial administrative seats would not hold out for long, and that new forces were needed. This was the

case almost everywhere in the country, and especially in the Yangzi valley provinces and Guangdong.

On 23 October, the day after the rising had won in Changsha, the Hunan military government started recruiting men for a revolutionary army. Dozens of recruitment stations were opened in the outskirts of the city, and nearly 60,000 enlisted in the first three days.⁸ Most of the recruits were urban labourers and suburban peasants, many of them members of secret societies.

In early November, New Army troops in Nanjing started an uprising. Their attempt failed. The revolutionary units of the Nanjing garrison were compelled to withdraw to Zhenjiang. Not until volunteer units arrived from Shanghai, Zhejiang, Guangdong, and other localities, could an offensive be mounted on Nanjing, culminating in its capture in early December. According to Huang Xing, nearly 10,000 men from Guangzhou alone arrived to help take Nanjing. By the end of 1911, a 200,000-strong volunteer revolutionary army was massed in the Nanjing area.⁹ Even in mid-February 1912, after a larger part of the troops returned to Shanghai and other localities, the Nanjing republican garrison of seven divisions numbered 75,000 men.

As in Hubei so in the other provinces, the New Army rebel units made up only a small portion of the revolutionary army. The newly formed troops were also different in social background. The stream of volunteers came chiefly from the poorest sections of the peasantry, ruined artisans, workers, and coolies.

Thousands of students of higher and secondary schools put aside their books and joined the revolutionary army. Special 'student units' were formed in Shanghai, Wuhan, Changsha, and Nanjing. The women of China displayed extraordinary enthusiasm, too. The special women's battalion formed in Shanghai fought with great courage in the battle for Nanjing.

Volunteering to the revolutionary army was only one of the outlets for the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses. In some areas workers, peasants, and members of secret societies took an active part in the uprisings. In Shanghai, for example, the scales were turned against the Manchu authorities not by the troops, but the workers of China's largest industrial enterprise, the Jiangnan arsenal.¹⁰ In Yichang, the rising of the garrison was immediately backed up by several thousand workers building the Sichuan-Hankou railway.

In Guangdong, the declaration of independence was preceded by uprisings of impoverished peasants, artisans, and *declassé* elements in a number of counties. Rebel detachments, numbering tens of thousands of men, were the chief armed force of the Guangzhou revolutionary government.¹¹ In Shanxi, Guizhou, and in many counties of Hunan, Zhejiang, Sichuan, and Hubei, secret societies were as highly

active as the New Army rebels in driving out the Manchus.

Large masses of people rendered the army support by donating money to the revolution. The poorest sections of the population, too, are said to have contributed their meagre earnings.¹²

A correspondent of the newspaper *Russkoye slovo*, who witnessed the revolutionary events in China, reported on 4 November 1911: 'Central China is engulfed in a commoners' revolution. Village people, tillers, armed with hoes, are streaming into the cities, bringing provisions for the revolutionaries, joining their units, giving away horses and carts for transportation. The arsenals of the smaller towns are empty. Arms have been distributed to the people. Patriotic marches are being held in the towns captured by revolutionaries. People carry streamers inscribed, "Liberated China".'

The selfless aid rendered to the revolutionary army by the mass of the people was what brought down the Qing monarchy. Assessing the revolutionary events in China, Lenin wrote: 'Had it not been for the immense spiritual and revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the Chinese democracy would have been unable to overthrow the old order and establish the republic.'¹³

Another important factor that sped the Qing dynasty to its doom was the involvement in the anti-Manchu movement of the liberal bourgeoisie and liberal landlords. The liberal bourgeois-landlord opposition had come into conflict with the Qing government even before the outbreak of the revolution, for the government had rejected any and all compromise. It had refused to introduce a constitution, to convene a parliament, and to carry out other moderate reforms which, as the liberals saw it, could have averted a revolutionary explosion in the country and paved the way to a gradual conversion of China into a bourgeois state. With the revolution under way, the liberals had no choice but to turn their backs on the Qing, assume a new guise, and try to seize the reins. With their already considerable political experience, making the most of the existing political machinery (the provincial consultative assemblies), they plunged into the struggle for power with the aim of limiting the scope of the revolution.

In quite a few provinces, to avert armed action, the constitutionalist consultative assemblies tried to persuade local Qing authorities to secede from Beijing on their own initiative. And wherever the liberals managed to prevail on the governor and the top provincial officials to do so, the overthrow of Manchu power occurred without bloodshed. In Suzhou, the administrative seat of Jiangsu province, for example, Qing rule was ended without a shot being fired. Local *shenshi* persuaded governor Cheng Dequan to declare Jiangsu's independence, and thereupon elected him head of the new provincial republican administration. In Guangxi, the consultative assembly

compelled governor Chen Bingkun to consent to the secession of the province, whereupon he was elected head of the military government. A few days later, however, commander of local guardsmen Lu Rongting revolted, expelled Chen, and set himself up as the military governor of the province. In Guangdong and Jiangxi, too, Qing governors Zhang Mingqi and Feng Rukui were offered the top office in the new provincial administration. True servants of the Manchu dynasty, however, they declined to serve the republic. Zhang escaped to Hong Kong, while Feng committed suicide. Thereupon, Wu Zezhang, commander of a brigade, was installed as military governor of Jiangxi, while Hu Hanmin, a Unity League leader, was made military governor of Guangdong.

In Chengdu, the administrative seat of Sichuan province, the Qing were also ousted peacefully, by means of a deal between leaders of provincial consultative assembly and provincial viceroy Zhao Erfeng. Prior to this, on 22 November, the city of Chongqing was liberated and a revolutionary government was set up there, headed by members of the Unity League. The constitutionalists of Chengdu, who were frightened by this development, reacted with extraordinary energy. On the 24th, Pu Dianjun and viceroy Zhao Erfeng, laying aside their previous injuries and conflicts in face of the awesome revolutionary events, worked out an accord proclaiming the independence of Sichuan. Under the accord, the administration of Sichuan would pass to the provincial consultative assembly, provincial officials would remain in office and perform their functions as usual under the protection of the military government, and Zhao would retain command of the troops. Sichuan's independence from Beijing was officially proclaimed on 27 November. Pu Dianjun was elected military governor. But the people of the province were angered by the shady deal, and a revolutionary outburst brewed in Chengdu and other parts of the province. So the liberals were forced to resort to one more manoeuvre. On 22 December, backed by armed townsmen, they arrested and executed the hated Qing satrap, Zhao Erfeng, and reshuffled the provincial government. Among others, they substituted Yin Changhen, chief of the local military academy, for Pu as military governor; Luo Lun was appointed his deputy.¹⁴ This enabled the liberals to hang on to power and avert a popular rising. But in most cases, provincial consultative assemblies considered declaring independence a forced and extreme act. In some provinces it was preceded by other methods of temporary adaptation (by the constitutional monarchists) to the revolution.

In Guangdong, Jiangxi, Anhui, and Shandong, the consultative assemblies, sensing the imminence of armed revolts, initially tried to declare their provinces neutral and thereby avert revolution.

In those provinces where the revolutionary forces were not strong

enough to overthrow the Manchu authorities by armed action or to compel the liberals to join the revolution peacefully, the consultative assemblies and Qing officials did indeed succeed in confining matters to a declaration of neutrality. This was the case, for example, in the three North-Eastern provinces, where the old Qing officialdom had remained in the saddle.

Seeing that the downfall of the Manchu throne was inevitable, Chinese landlords, *shenshi*, Qing officials and military commanders hastened to join the revolutionary camp alongside the liberals. In the summer of 1912, Huang Xing made the following astute observation about the behaviour of this group of people: 'When the general mood in the country made it apparent that the old regime was doomed—somewhere around November of last year—and that whatever victories the handful of Manchu soldiers may score would not halt the natural course of events, some of the highest-ranking imperial dignitaries began to go over to the republic in quick succession. A wholesale betrayal of the government began. Most of these dignitaries, the bulk of whom already had one foot in the grave, were motivated, as I see it, by just one thought: not to lose their lucrative positions. Some, who were more apathetic, expected to fit themselves in somehow with the new regime and to carry on as before, merely erasing the word "daqing" on the signboard outside their yamen, while others, who were more energetic and ambitious, hoped, relying on their statemanship and experience, soon to be able to channel the new currents along the old course.'¹⁵

The military administrations formed in the provinces following the overthrow of Manchu rule were coalition governments, consisting of revolutionaries, liberals, former Qing bureaucrats and military commanders. Most of them were headed by commanders of New Army units, such as Cai E in Yunnan, Zhang Fenghui in Shenxi, Yan Xishan in Shanxi, and Sun Daoren in Fujian (all of whom had studied in Japan and joined the Unity League there in 1905). In Zhejiang, a leader of the liberal-constitutionalist movement of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang region, Tang Shouqian, was elected to head the military government on the initiative of the revolutionaries themselves, and in Shanghai they elected a prominent Unity League figure, Chen Qimei.

The bloc of liberals and feudal bureaucratic elements worked assiduously to push the revolutionaries away from power in the provinces. The counter-revolutionary coup in Hunan was a clear example of their plotting. On 22 October 1911, a military government had been set up there, headed by revolutionaries Jiao Dafeng and Chen Zuoxin, as a result of a successful New Army rising in Changsha. The Hunan liberals, particularly the chairman of the provincial consultative assembly, Tan Yankai, were displeased. With

the consent of the revolutionaries their leading lights assumed posts in the government, and soon captured the most responsible ones. Tan was made civic governor of the province, and was also placed at the head of the provincial provisional parliament consisting almost entirely of members of the Hunan consultative assembly. Thereupon, the liberals edged the revolutionaries away from provincial affairs.

The Hunan liberals produced a peculiar theoretical foundation for their counter-revolutionary moves. Tan propagated the idea that the revolution would not succeed unless 'rich aristocratic families, civil servants, and military officials joined the revolution'.¹⁶ Far from decrying these views, the revolutionary leaders lent them a sympathetic ear. Jiao Dafeng, for one, stated: 'I stand for a racial revolution. I respect all those who belong to our nation, irrespective of their being officials or *shenshi*'.¹⁷ The Hunan revolutionaries' spirit of compromise and conciliation, mixed with Han chauvinism, saw them lose their hold on the power they had won at a high price within a week of the uprising. And when, after a rude awakening, they endeavoured to regain power, the liberals joined forces with the feudal elements and carried out a military coup on 31 October, killing Jiao Dafeng, Chen Zuoxin, and other prominent revolutionaries. Whereupon Tan Yankai, the civic head, was also elected military head of the government.

The basic guidelines of the home and foreign policy of the provincial military governments were set forth in countless appeals, proclamations, telegrams, and other documents published on the heels of successful risings. As a rule, these documents were drawn up in advance by provincial principles of the Unity League.

All revolutionary administrations in provinces and large cities, without a single exception, set the prime task of deposing the Manchus. Here there were no compromises. Addressing 'fathers and brothers in the 18 provinces', calling on all Chinese 'to devote their strength to the final victory over the enemy', they appealed to the *shenshi*, the merchants, policemen, generals, dignitaries, governors, and landlords, to join the anti-Manchu cause. The Wuchang military government, for example, wrote in its Appeal to Provincial Viceroy and Governors: 'Esteemed dignitaries, you are also descendants of Huangdi, and though you are still holding high posts, it is not likely that the Manchus have complete trust in you.... If you range yourselves on our side, we will serve the republic together, and will deliver our countrymen from the pit of despair, giving the mountains and rivers back to the great Han people.'¹⁸

The proclamations generally contained the demand that China be made a republic. As for the third slogan of the Unity League, that of 'equal rights to land', it was mentioned in just the declaration of the military government of Yunnan province, and the state-

ment of the revolutionary government in Chongqing, which reproduced in full the Declaration of the Military Government drawn up by Sun Yatsen in 1905. Later, however, the slogan was never mentioned again by the republican authorities either in Yunnan or Chongqing, or, for that matter, in any other province or city.

The provincial governments left the matter of introducing republican forms of government in regions, prefectures, and counties to local *shenshi* and Chinese officials of the former Qing administration. Only officials of Manchu descent were dismissed. Headed by Unity League members, the Chongqing government asked officials 'to perform their functions conscientiously hand in hand with local *shenshi*', and warned that if 'they wilfully abandoned their duties' the distinguished *shenshi* would have to place them under arrest.¹⁹ Unity League member Sun Yuyun, military governor of Anhui, forbade dismissal of old officials. 'Dismissal of an official,' he decreed, 'is tolerable only if the chiefs of the civil administrations of the northern or southern part of the province have a suitable replacement that will be approved by me on receipt of an appropriate detailed report. Arbitrary appointments are impermissible, because that may lead to disorder.'²⁰ Similar directives were also circulated in other independent provinces.

The bourgeois-landlord republican authorities were determined to prevent independent revolutionary action by the peasants and urban poor. Capitalists and landlords were disturbed by the high tide of the spontaneous popular movement on the eve of the Xinhai revolution. A few days after flinging out the Qing regime, republican provincial authorities issued a succession of addresses and orders to local *shenshi*, the officials, and county and rural self-government committees, calling on them to activate landlord militia units. On 12 October 1911, in fact, the Wuchang government telegraphed the following to members of town and village self-government committees up and down the country: 'we are worried that the southern and eastern provinces have suffered from floods and droughts for two consecutive years. People have no choice but to abandon their homes. Life is not settling back to normal. So, if our banner of struggle for justice is going to be raised, the hungry and destitute are sure to take advantage of the occasion and begin plundering.'²¹ The Wuchang government suggested that the only remedy lay in 'urgently forming local self-defence militia units [*tuanlian*] that would maintain order in their area'.²² The statement went on to say that 'the poor are required to serve with arms in hand, and the rich to contribute funds. Then the vagrant people with no occupation would be fed thanks to services in the units, while the prosperous families would preserve their property'.²³

In an Address to Countrymen, the military government of Shenxi

required officials and *shenshi* to direct their efforts to forming units of *mintuan*.²⁴ Zhang Fenghui, the military governor of the province, issued an order saying that 'if any malcontents should start disorders and excesses, local militia units shall either themselves arrest and punish the offenders, or, if the case is serious, report to the military government, which shall send troops to put them down and ensure public order'.²⁵ The republican authorities in Chongqing instructed local *shenshi* 'to exert pressure on all sorts of irresponsible elements and prevent any actions against Manchu officials'; they also required them to reinforce the armed details of the landlord militia 'wherever the police force is not large enough'.²⁶

Though they offered feudalist landlords and all men of wealth protection of their lives and property, some republican authorities did take steps to mitigate the lot of the masses. The head and land tax on the autumn 1911 harvest was repealed, and arrears were written off. But not all provinces by far took this course. The provincial governments of Sichuan and Shenxi, for example, wanted the head and land tax paid in full. All local republican administrations abolished the *liqin*, but this was done with certain reservations. Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Anhui provinces retained the *liqin* for salt, sugar, and wine, and Sichuan province for salt and rice. Transit duties for meat, cattle, wine, and vegetable oil were reduced 20 per cent.

In foreign affairs, the provincial republican administrations followed the guidelines of the Unity League's Address to Foreign Powers to the letter. The Wuchang, Shanghai, Yunnan, Sichuan, and other military governments of provinces and cities asked the population 'to refrain from hostility towards foreigners', 'to treat foreigners courteously', and 'to pay greater attention to the protection of foreign churches and their property'. They threatened to execute anyone who endangered the lives or property of foreigners.

In short, the new republican authorities did everything they could to avert any independent anti-feudal or anti-imperialist movement of the people.

But despite their efforts, commoners did try to act on their own in the initial stages of the revolution. In the prefecture of Yangzhou (Jiangsu province), Manchu rule was ousted by a popular rebellion. A certain Sun Tiansheng at the head of several dozen men came to the county seat, where crowds of people joined him. The rebels sacked the salt administration, the local treasury, and released prisoners from the local gaol.²⁷ The rising in Yangzhou struck fear into the authorities of the neighbouring counties that had already flung off the Manchu yoke. Republican troops were despatched from Zhenjiang to put down the spontaneous action.

In Suzhou, where the Qing authorities were deposed peacefully, 'disorders' occurred in late December 1911. The police administra-

tion and other government offices were ransacked. During the New Army rising in Xian (at the end of October 1911), crowds attacked banks, pawnshops, and money changers.²⁸ In Shouzhou county, the first in Anhui province to expel the Manchus, rebellious peasants burnt the tax records kept in the county office.²⁹ In some Hunan province counties, the insurrectionists threw officials into prison cells, killed the chiefs of landlord militia units, ransacked tax-collection offices, and released prisoners.³⁰

In some localities there were spontaneous anti-foreign actions. In Xian, the crowd set fire to a school run by a Swedish missionary, and thereupon attacked and killed several foreigners.³¹ In some of the counties of Shanxi province, the people destroyed foreign churches, and drove out the missionaries.³² There were anti-missionary riots in other provinces as well.

But the independent actions of the working people, primarily peasants, were not on a large scale and exercised little or no influence on the course of the revolution. This should not be ascribed entirely to the resistance of feudalists and the bourgeoisie. Oppressed for many centuries, ignorant and downtrodden, disunited and constantly on the edge of starvation, the Chinese peasantry had had no opportunity to work out any more or less clear goals for which to fight, to organise and exert pressure on the bourgeoisie, or to make it break off relations with the feudal element and tear down the feudal social and economic order.

In sum, from the outset the revolution was beset by sharp class contradictions within the anti-Manchu camp, which consisted of diverse social forces—the revolutionary bourgeoisie, the mass of toilers, the liberals, and a large group of Chinese feudal landlords and bureaucrats who had hastened to join the new forces. The temporary unity of this politically diverse camp reposed on just the one common aim—to overthrow the Qing dynasty.

Fighting in the Hankou Area

On 9 October 1911, Huguang viceroy Rui Cheng arrested several dozen revolutionaries, and sent off a despatch to that effect to Beijing. The Qing government felt reassured. It assumed that it no longer had anything to fear from revolutionaries in Wuchang. On the 11th it issued an edict lauding Rui for his energy and for 'nipping trouble in the bud'.³³ But on the same day, telegrams reached the imperial capital from Hubei and the adjoining provinces with word of the revolutionaries' victory in Wuchang. A new imperial edict was issued, testifying to the confusion that gripped the Manchu rulers in face of the swiftly moving events. 'We are sincerely surprised and startled,'

the edict said. 'The troops and the revolutionaries have long since come to an arrangement between themselves, so as to start disorders. Yet Rui Cheng had taken no timely measures against this and thereby enabled the revolutionaries to gain possession of the main city in the province.'³⁴

Zhang Biao, who had fled with a wretched handful of loyal troops to Liujiamiao, a railway town a few kilometres north of Hankou, shied from the risk of attacking the revolutionary army.

On 11 October, abandoned by his troops, Rui Cheng asked the British consul in Hankou to help suppress the uprising. A meeting of the consular council discussed the option of using foreign armed forces against the rebels. Opinions differed. The British consul was in favour of sending foreign gunboats into action, while the Russian and French consuls opposed his proposal, and were supported in this by consuls of other countries.

On 12 October, when the Manchu court finally understood the implications of the Wuchang uprising, it ordered war minister Yin Chang to rush two infantry divisions to Hubei and suppress the rebels. The naval minister, too, was instructed to send a fleet of warships under Admiral Sa Zhenbing up the Yangzi to Wuhan. Yin Chang, who had been put in charge of operations, arrived at Xinyang, an important strategic point at the approaches to Wuhan, on 15 October with forward units of the Beiyang army.

In the early hours of 16 October, the Hubei revolutionary government ordered its troops to cross the Yangzi from Wuchang to Hankou and Hanyang. Later in the day, eight warships of Admiral Sa's squadron reached Wuhan, and opened fire on the positions of the Wuchang revolutionary army at Hankou. The shore artillery returned the fire, and the enemy ships withdrew towards Jiujiang.

Meanwhile, northern troops began arriving at Liujiamiao. The revolutionary government in Wuchang decided to capture that important junction and eliminate the threat to Hankou. In the morning of 17 October, revolutionary troops went on the offensive. A battle ensued. As in later battles against government troops, the bulk of the revolutionary soldiers were peasants, workers, and students, most of whom had never been in battle before, and had no knowledge of warfare. They learned as they fought. Most of their commanders had been common soldiers just a week before, and also lacked experience. Still, the revolutionary army emerged victorious in the fighting on 17 October. The enemy turned tail, and Liujiamiao was taken.

The revolutionary troops were aided by the local people—peasants and railwaymen. The latter tore up the track, a trainload of Manchu soldiers was derailed, and came under heavy artillery fire. As the revolutionary troops advanced on Liujiamiao, they were joined by local peasants armed with hoes, axes, and other primitive weapons.

People sent food to the battle lines, took care of the wounded, put out fires, and rendered much other help. The victory at Liujiamiao was, indeed, a victory of the people. It demonstrated the quickly mounting strength of the revolution and the infirmity of the Manchu monarchy. Revolutionary soldiers and their commanders were spoiling for battle. But He Xifan, a former battalion commander, who had been placed in command of the revolutionary forces, had no faith in the people's army, and was reluctant to attack. He held that it was best to just defend Hankou. Defying the cowardly commander's orders, a few revolutionary units continued the northward offensive, but were brought to a halt by the enemy. The troops showed their disaffection for He Xifan, and Li Yuanhong took advantage of this to replace him with Zhang Jingliang, a former regimental commander who had a few days before suggested that he and Li should carry out a counter-revolutionary coup. The revolutionaries had wanted to shoot Zhang there and then, but Li intervened and took him under his protection. Now the traitor was given command of the revolutionary army.

In the meantime, a large government force had come to the approaches of Hankou. It was farthest from Zhang Jingliang's mind to take any determined action. He provoked panic among the commanders. On 26 October, the Qing army went on the offensive in the Liujiamiao sector. At the same time, four of Admiral Sa's warships flying British flags entered Hankou and subjected the city to an indiscriminate bombardment. The following day, the revolutionary troops, suffering heavy losses, were compelled to abandon Liujiamiao. They retreated to Dazhimen railway station in Hankou.

The troops and their officers displayed extraordinary valour, but counter-revolutionary Zhang Jingliang betrayed the military plans of the revolutionary forces to the commanders of the Qing troops. During the fighting he limited the issue of cartridges, though there was not the slightest shortage of ammunition. The rebels were reluctant to leave Liujiamiao, but he ordered them to retreat. His treachery infuriated the revolutionary soldiers and commanders. They arrested him in defiance of Li Yuanhong's objections, and put him before a firing squad.

On 29 October, fierce street fighting broke out in Hankou. The day before, Unity League leaders Huang Xing and Song Jiaoren had come to Wuchang, and Huang took command of the revolutionary troops in Hankou. But the situation was beyond repair. A large force of well-armed Qing troops under General Feng Guozhang of the Beiyang clique, receiving all possible aid from foreigners, had mounted an all-out offensive. Foreign consuls in Hankou permitted government troops to enter the limits of the foreign concessions, and most foreign hospitals admitted none but the wounded of the Qing army.

To crush the heroic resistance of the people's army, General Feng ordered his troops to set fire to Hankou. The city was ablaze for three days and nights. Tens of thousands of families were rendered homeless. Many died in the flames. Those who rushed out of their burning houses were fired upon by Qing troops. Terrified men and women flung themselves into the river. But more still perished in the fires, afraid to leave their homes and expose themselves to the cruelty of the government soldiers. On 2 November, the government army was in complete control of the city.³⁵

The whole country was in anger over the atrocities perpetrated by Qing troops in Hankou. People in the zone of the hostilities looked upon government troops as bandits, and assisted the revolutionary forces in every possible way. The correspondent of *Russkoye slovo* reported on 29 October 1911: 'The population is extremely hostile to the government army. They even burn the food stores, because they do not want to sell provisions to government troops.'

Peasants formed their own armed organisations to restrain the wanton Qing soldiers, and support the revolutionary army. Peaceful civilians agitated among soldiers of the Qing army, urging them not to fight against revolutionaries. By that time, armed units from other provinces had begun to arrive in Wuhan to reinforce the revolutionary army. On 2 November, a brigade of 3,000 men marched in from Hunan. The Wuchang government reopened its recruitment stations. And despite the initial setbacks, the revolutionary army soon regained its combat capacity thanks to the people's support and the vast scale of the revolutionary movement.

Yuan Shikai Is Made Prime Minister and Manoeuvres Between the Court and the Revolutionaries

The revolution caught the Manchus unawares. The imperialist powers, too, were badly frightened, for their colonial policy in China reposed on the acquiescence of the throne. The court and the powers cast about urgently for a political figure that could be depended upon to put down the rebellious nation. As they saw it, the sole suitable man was the old Qing dignitary and general, Yuan Shikai, whose many years of punitive activity had earned him the trust of the foreign imperialists and the Manchu-Chinese feudal reactionaries, and who had unquestioned influence among the generals and other officers of his Northern Army.

On 14 October 1911, the Manchu court appointed Yuan Shikai viceroy of Hubei and instructed him to 'quell the mutiny'. But the wary courtier, pleading 'ailment in his legs', turned the appointment

down. On 20 October, Xu Shichang, deputy premier of the Manchu government, was sent to speak to him, and asked him on behalf of the throne to take the offered post. Yuan Shikai set his terms: he wanted unrestricted powers in forming the troops and in matters of army and naval command; he wanted to be permitted to spend funds for military purposes as he saw fit; he wanted a parliament to be convened the following year, and a responsible cabinet of ministers to be formed; there should be no repressions against participants in the revolution; political parties should be legalised. Yuan Shikai's scheme was to wrest as much power as possible from the Manchu government and, first of all, to take complete control of the army. He was prepared to make some minor concessions to the revolutionaries, and then engineer a split in the revolutionary camp.

In the meantime, the flames of revolution blazed all over the country. Troops of the Wuchang government were standing their ground against the Qing army at Hankou. On 27 October, the throne appointed Yuan Shikai commander-in-chief of all armed forces in the Yangzi valley, while war minister Yin Chang was recalled to Beijing. But Yuan was dragging his feet, for the Manchus had not accepted some of his terms.

On 29 October, the 6th and 20th divisions of the Northern army stationed in Hebei revolted against the Qing dynasty. Their commanders, Wu Luzhen and Zhang Shaozeng set Beijing twelve demands. In substance, they wanted the government to stop the war against the revolutionaries and introduce a constitutional monarchy. The generals warned that if their demands were rejected, they would move their troops against Beijing.³⁶ That day Shanxi province, which borders on Hebei, announced that it was siding with the republicans. The Qing dynasty was on the brink of disaster. Afraid that he might overplay his hand in the deal with the Qing, Yuan Shikai took firm action in support of the quickly sinking monarchy. His agents assassinated Wu Luzhen at the very moment when he had come to terms with the revolutionaries in Shanxi and had made up his mind to lead his troops from Shijiazhuang against Beijing to overthrow the Qing dynasty.³⁷

On 30 October, the throne issued an edict admitting its guilt in the events that had led to the 'mutiny in Hebei and other provinces'.³⁸ Other edicts followed, in which the government annested political prisoners, including those of the 1898 movement, legalised the existence of political organisations, solemnly promised to introduce constitutional government, and declared the equality of Manchus and Chinese and the personal inviolability of all citizens.

The collapse of the Manchu throne was near. Manchus were fleeing from Beijing en masse. By early November more than a quarter million people left for the North-Eastern provinces.³⁹ At that critical

hour, the throne appointed Yuan Shikai prime minister and gave him command of the operational army. This was on 2 November 1911, but it was not until the 16th that he formed a government, consisting essentially of his old friends in Qing service, such as Tang Shaoyi and Zhao Bingjun. Ministerial posts were also given to such leaders of the constitutionalist movement as Liang Qichao and Zhang Jian. This meant to show the bourgeois-landlord liberals that Yuan Shikai was not against them, and willing to co-operate. (True, neither Zhang nor Liang accepted the appointments, because they felt that the time was not yet ripe to co-operate with Yuan.)

Yuan Shikai's appointment brought fortuitous fellow-travellers of the revolution in Shandong to their senses. On 27 November, governor Sun Baoqi repealed the independence of the province and expressed repentance for his 'impertinent' act (Shandong's temporary secession from Beijing), ascribing it to the desperate situation created by the 'revolutionary ferment'. To end the threat to the imperial capital from Shanxi province, Yuan Shikai despatched a division of Northern troops. It exerted hard pressure on Yan Xishan's force there, and captured Taiyuan on 20 December.

But the situation in provinces still under Beijing's control was extremely tense. A spontaneous popular rising erupted under Wang Tianzong in the western regions of Henan province. His detachments, consisting of dislocated peasants, urban poor, and *declassé* elements, had operated in the hills of Henan before the outbreak of the 1911 revolution. After the Wuchang rising, Wang contacted Henan revolutionaries, who appointed him *grand dudu*. In late November 1911, the rebels tried to capture Luoyang and other cities in Henan, but were repulsed by the Northern Army. By early 1912, however, Wang's detachments were in control of a number of Henan counties adjoining Shenxi and Shanxi. (After the abdication of the Manchu dynasty, Yuan Shikai got Wang Tianzong to come to his side and made him a general.)⁴⁰

The revolutionary movement engulfed the seaboard of Shandong province. In the early half of December, Yantai, Rongcheng, and other cities flung off Manchu rule. In the metropolitan province of Zhili (Hebei), too, the situation was strained. Some time after Wu Luzhen's abortive attempt to start an uprising in Shijiazhuang, a unit of his 6th division led by members of the Republican League captured Luanzhou on 23 November. But other troops in the metropolitan province did not support the rising, and when the rebels set out from Luanzhou in mid-December, heading for Tianjin, they were intercepted and defeated.

The weakness of the revolutionary movement in the metropolitan province was due not only to the large numbers of Northern Army troops, which were by and large loyal to Yuan Shikai, but also to the

slackness of the local revolutionaries. The Beijing-Tianjin chapter of the Unity League formed in November by Wang Jingwei (following his release from prison) concentrated its efforts on winning Yuan Shikai to the side of the republic, rather than on organising armed actions by the army and people. Wang had wormed himself so closely into Yuan Shikai's favour that the latter adopted him officially as his son.

Yuan's entering the political arena complicated matters for the revolution, because he had incomparably greater prestige in the country than the unpopular Qing dynasty. The leaders of the revolutionary South, meanwhile, had failed to work out the right tactic against Yuan Shikai. They went out of their way to gain his backing. In fact, when word reached Wuchang, at the end of October, of Yuan's appointment as commander-in-chief of the armed forces assigned to suppress the revolution, a group of leaders of the Wuchang government sent him a letter on behalf of the people of Hubei, asking him to support the revolution and help drive out the Manchus. In his replies, Yuan flirted with the revolutionaries, suggesting that the war should be stopped and the conflict settled by peaceful means. In early November, the Wuchang government announced that if Yuan did not act against the revolution, he would be given the post of president of the republic.

Responding to this promise, Yuan sent his negotiators to Hankou on 10 November to ask the British consul to mediate in his talks with the revolutionaries. At the same time, Li Yuanhong was handed a letter which said military operations would cease forthwith if the revolutionaries accepted a constitutional monarchy. Li Yuanhong, Sun Wu, Hu Ying, Tang Hualong, and Sung Jiaoren put Yuan's proposal before the Wuchang government. The majority was in favour of negotiating with Yuan Shikai: it was believed that if Yuan went against the Manchu court, the revolutionaries would secure their aims so much more easily. They asked the Beijing negotiators to persuade Yuan Shikai 'to turn the spear' against the Manchus. But for Yuan, the main enemies were the revolutionaries. He secretly sent his son Yuan Keding to Wuhan with an offer to Huang Xing to betray the revolution. What Yuan was after was to cause a split in the revolutionary army and thereby weaken the forces of the revolution. Huang rejected Yuan's perfidious offer, and in a letter of 9 November called on Yuan to recognise the republican system and come out against the Qing dynasty. 'Then,' he wrote, 'not only the population of Hunan and Hubei will consider you a Napoleon and a Washington, but also all the provinces of the North and South will admire and worship you. The nation waits for you as it waits for rain during a drought. Everybody welcomes you. An opportunity like that occurs once in a thousand years. Take it.'⁴¹ Huang also

asked Yuan on what terms he would agree to go over to the side of the revolutionaries.

The efforts of the bourgeois revolutionaries, who had no sympathy for the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggles of the masses, were centred on coming to terms with Yuan Shikai, on kicking out the Manchus, and establishing a republic with his assistance. Yuan could not have dreamt of a more favourable set-up. He was being wooed by the Manchu nobility, and wooed by the revolutionaries of the South. He walked the tightrope nimbly between the Qing and the revolutionaries, furthering his own interests and those of the Chinese feudal compradores and foreign imperialists.

While flirting with the revolutionaries, he delivered blow after painful blow to them to make them yield ground. General Duan Qirui, appointed commander of government troops in the Wuhan area on 17 November, was ordered to take Hanyang. His well-trained 19,000-man force, armed to the teeth, mounted the attack on 23 November. There was fierce fighting. Despite their lack of combat experience, the revolutionary army put up a gallant resistance. The outcome of the battle was settled by the treachery of a group of commanders of the republican army, who had suddenly gone over to the enemy with their men in the morning of 27 November, having previously cut the fuses of the landmines blocking the approaches to the city.⁴² Government troops bore down on Hanyang in a powerful thrust, and took it on the same day. They were helped by German military engineers, who constructed a pontoon bridge across the Hanshui north of Hanyang.⁴³ This was an act of direct foreign intervention against the Chinese revolution.

After taking Hanyang, Yuan felt that the time had come to open negotiations with representatives of the revolutionary army. Britain's minister in Beijing, Sir John Jordan, acted as mediator. He instructed the British consul in Hankou to approach the belligerent parties with the offer of a cease-fire and peace talks. The revolutionary authorities in the South, who were not loath to come to terms with Yuan Shikai, accepted. They believed that they would succeed in winning Yuan to their side by negotiations. The fighting at Wuchang stopped on 3 December.

On 18 December, in Shanghai, Yuan Shikai's negotiator, Tang Shaoyi, and Wu Tingfang, who represented the revolutionary authorities, held their first discussion. Wu, a Western-educated diplomat who previously served the Qing government, had taken the side of the revolution after the Manchus were driven out of Shanghai. A cease-fire was concluded, effective for Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shandong, and Manchuria. Under the terms of the agreement, government troops were to be withdrawn from Hanyang and Hankou. Tang Shaoyi saw to it that the cease-fire should not apply to Shenxi and

Shanxi provinces. Yuan took advantage of this, and moved part of his troops from the Wuhan area to those two provinces against the revolutionary movement there.

At the Shanghai talks, Wu Tingfang demanded the abdication of the Manchu emperor, and the institution of a republic. Tang Shaoyi, acting off his own bat, submitted a compromise proposal: to convene a parliament and let it decide the future form of governance. The Qing government consented to Tang's proposal, whereupon Wu accepted it as well. By the end of December, the two sides drew up the rules for convening the parliament. Each province would send three delegates, with those from Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Xinjiang, and the three provinces of Manchuria being appointed by the Beijing government. This meant that the Manchu court would participate in choosing the form of governance—a radical and generous concession of the southern revolutionaries.

But Sun Yatsen's return to China, and the establishment in Nanjing of a provisional central republican government, affected the further course of the negotiations and blocked implementation of the Wu Tingfang-Tang Shaoyi agreement.

Establishment of the Nanjing Provisional Government

By mid-November 1911, the most burning question of all was that of a central revolutionary government. The insurgent provinces needed a central body of power to deal with the essential problems of home and foreign policy.

Dozens of political organisations and groups were springing up in Shanghai, Wuchang, and other cities that had expelled the Manchu authorities. The country had no political party with a stable organisational framework and a clear platform expressing the interests of any of the classes taking part in the revolution. Neither the working class nor the peasants had any political party at all. The Unity League, which was in substance a bourgeois republican party, had practically ceased its organisational activity since the victorious rising in Wuchang and the spread of the rising to other provinces. When the revolution broke out, political adventurers flocked to the Unity League in the hope of retaining their old positions or getting something better in the republican state machine. On the other hand, those of the League's members who had pursued but one aim, that of deposing the Manchu monarchy, were leaving the party.

Among the new political parties and groups, the most popular were the People's Society (Minshe) based in Wuchang, and the United Republican League (Gonghe tongyihui) based in Shanghai.

They were the most active in the drive for a central republican government. Prior to Sun Yatsen's return to China, the Unity League played no more than a secondary role in the matter. The initiator of the People's Society was Sun Wu. Its other leaders were Sun Faxu, an agent of Yuan Shikai, Rao Hanxiang, a highly-placed Qing bureaucrat, Liu Chenyu and Hu Ying, who belonged to the right wing of the Unity League, and Tan Yankai, leader of the Hunan liberals. Li Yuanhong was made chairman.⁴⁴ It came as no surprise that Sun Wu leagued up with these people, for as a leader of the Universal Progress League he had always represented the anti-Manchu Chinese landlords. After the uprising, the Universal Progress League connived with the clique of Li Yuanhong, which, in effect, represented the interests of these very Chinese landlords, and was at loggerheads with the leaders of the Literary Society and the Unity League.

The purpose of the People's Society was to help Li Yuanhong and his clique to gain power in all the provinces that had proclaimed independence, and to turn the Wuchang provincial government into the central government. On 9 November 1911, Li telegraphed the military governors of the various independent provinces, suggesting that they send delegates to Wuchang in order to form a provisional central government. He also asked them to nominate candidates to ministerial offices in the new government. His own suggestion was that Wu Tingfang should be named minister of foreign affairs, and Zhang Jian, a prominent industrialist and one of the leaders of the movement for constitutional monarchy, minister of finance.

The United Republican League, however, which essentially represented the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang area, held that the provisional central government should have its seat in Shanghai. Its leaders convened a conference in Shanghai with representatives of a number of provinces sent either by military governors or provincial consultative assemblies. On 15 November, the group passed a resolution that a conference of provincial representatives should gather in Shanghai and here form a central republican government. Spokesmen of the Wuchang government, who had come to Shanghai as well, managed to have this resolution altered on 24 November, and the venue of the conference was shifted to Wuhan. Furthermore, the Shanghai gathering attended by Wuchang delegates elected Li Yuanhong supreme commander of the troops of all the republican provinces.

On 30 November, in the British concession of Hankou, representatives of eleven provinces gathered at a conference which they decided to name Joint League of Representatives of the Governments of Provincial Military Governors. The conference drew up statutes for the organisation of the provisional government of the Republic

of China. The statutes said the 'provisional president shall be elected by representatives of the governments of military governors of various provinces', meaning that the conference would elect him. The provisional parliament was to be formed of representatives of the said governments, with three deputies from each province. The statutes defined the rights and duties of the provisional president and the provisional parliament.

The conference resolved, too, that Yuan Shikai should be offered the post of president if he recognised the republic.⁴⁵ This was evidence that the liberals and right wingers of the Unity League were out to put an end to the revolution as quickly as possible with the help of 'strong man' Yuan Shikai. The resolution had a debilitating effect on the further course of the revolution, for it legalised appeasement and conciliation with feudal and compradore reactionaries represented by Yuan Shikai.

At this difficult time of decision, with leaders of the republican South embarking on a path beset with dangers for the future of the revolution, Sun Yatsen, leader of the Chinese bourgeois revolutionaries, returned from exile. He arrived in Shanghai on 25 December 1911, and was given a rousing reception by the populace. Sun was aware that the revolution had run into formidable difficulties. What he feared most was the hostility of the foreign powers. He was afraid that if the civil war between South and North should drag out, they would venture on military intervention. He was also clearly aware of the danger to the revolution presented by Yuan Shikai. He was one of only a few revolutionaries who called for an end to the peace talks with Yuan, and for deposing the Qing dynasty by armed force. Most of the other leaders of the Unity League, including Huang Xing, did not support him. On the contrary, they argued that the revolution would fail to depose the Manchus unless it had Yuan on its side. This was also the view of most of the military governors of insurgent provinces—Li Yuanhong, Tan Yankai, Cheng Dequan, Tang Shouqian, Sun Daoren, Lu Rongting, and others—and of many of the generals of the southern revolutionary army.

On 29 December, an assembly of delegates in Nanjing (the same as had gathered in Hankou, from where they had moved early in December 1911 to Nanjing, following its liberation from the Manchus) assumed the functions of the supreme legislature of the republic and elected Sun Yatsen provisional president (the sole vote cast against Sun was that of the Zhejiang province delegate). The voting was not really motivated by Sun Yatsen's popularity, but chiefly by the delegates' wish to frighten Yuan Shikai and spur him into action against the Qing dynasty. Before Sun was elected, the assembly had asked him to promise to send a telegram to Yuan Shikai and assure him that the moment the negotiations between North and South

were successfully completed, he would step down in Yuan's favour.

Still, Sun's election was a significant event. It stood for the victory of republican principles in backward semi-colonial and semi-feudal China. This had far-reaching implications.

On 1 January 1912, Sun Yatsen arrived in Nanjing and took up the duties of the republic's provisional president. On 3 January, the Nanjing assembly elected Li Yuanhong vice-president. Li had been nominated by Huang Xing, and the same Huang suggested appointing either Zhang Jian or Xiong Xiling, another follower of Yuan Shikai, minister of finance. But Sun Yatsen vehemently opposed the latter two nominations.⁴⁶ Most of the ministers of the newly formed provisional Nanjing republican government did not belong to the Unity League. Liberal constitutionalists Wu Tingfang, Tang Shouqian, and Zhang Jian were made ministers of justice, communications, and industry and trade, respectively. Cheng Dequan (minister of the interior), Chen Jintao (minister of finance), and Huang Zhongying (minister of the navy) had been high-ranking imperial officials. The Unity League was given just three ministries: Huang Xing was made minister of war, Cai Yuanpei minister of public education, and Wang Chonghui minister of foreign affairs.

In substance, the first six listed ministers boycotted the work of the provisional government. None of them even bothered to come to Nanjing, and none ever took up his duties. They installed themselves in Shanghai's International Settlement and waited for the negotiations between North and South to end, and supreme power to be handed over to Yuan Shikai. Li Yuanhong, too, followed their example and stayed on in Wuchang until the close of 1913. In addition, Sun Yatsen had to contend with the anything but revolutionary composition of the delegates to the Nanjing assembly, and with the conciliatory, pro-Yuan Shikai line of Huang Xing, Wang Jingwei, Song Jiaoren, and other Unity League leaders. His position as head of the Nanjing provisional government was, indeed, little less than tenuous. Later, in 1914, he would write that at the time of the Nanjing government, he had had little or no say in the affairs of state despite being the president.⁴⁷ Small wonder that the policy of the Nanjing government was uncertain, and moderate to the extreme.

On 1 January 1912, Sun addressed the people of China in a manifesto, promising 'to devote all strength and ability to carrying out the wishes of the people, rooting out all remnants of the abominable autocracy, asserting the Republic, and ensuring the people's livelihood'.⁴⁸

The most important task of the Nanjing provisional government, as Sun Yatsen saw it, was to secure the country's national and territorial integration. He advanced the principle of 'uniting internal governance', that is, regulating relations between the central govern-

ment in Nanjing and the provinces. His manifesto referred to the need for improving the material condition of the people and the social organisation of society. The new government, Sun Yatsen promised, would lead China to civilisation and progress.⁴⁹ But the manifesto did not say what specific measures would be taken to secure these goals.

In its Address to the Foreign Powers, the Nanjing provisional government reaffirmed the Unity League's policy guidelines: to recognise all unequal treaties concluded by foreign countries with the Qing authorities before the outbreak of the revolution, to continue paying indemnities and interest on loans, to preserve all privileges that the foreign powers enjoyed in China, and to protect the life and property of foreign nationals.⁵⁰ But the Address no longer contained the demand that the powers should abstain from helping the Manchu government, though in view of the evident interference of the imperialists in the affairs of the Chinese revolution this demand could have had a certain beneficial effect. More, the Nanjing provisional government appealed to the imperialist governments to render Chinese republicans 'assistance in carrying out their great plans' and 'to maintain with the Republic of China still more sincere relations of friendship and mutual respect.'⁵¹ These vaporous illusions of the Nanjing leaders were, in the final analysis, a sign of the weakness of the bourgeois revolutionaries and their dread of the imperialist powers.

The prescripts issued by Sun Yatsen, outlawing sale and purchase of slaves and slave-girls, torture and corporal punishment of criminals and political offenders, and the smoking of opium 'which is brought in from abroad', and certain other decrees of the Nanjing provisional government were unquestionably of a progressive nature, but did not go far enough in shaking the general system of feudal rule in China or loosening the semi-colonial hold of the imperialist powers.

The government did nothing at all to mitigate the lot of the masses. The peasants, comprising some 90 per cent of the nation, were still subjected to brutal exploitation by Chinese and Manchu feudalists. Though in their policy statements and propaganda pamphlets, the bourgeois revolutionaries did accuse the Manchus of having seized the best land, they never raised the question of confiscating the estates of Manchu landlords. Neither did they purge the old feudalistic bureaucratic apparatus.

The Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China, published in Nanjing on 10 March 1912, divided power into legislative, executive, and judicial. For the first time in China's long history, as the constitution said, the government was created by the people of the country. It proclaimed the equality of all citizens, freedom of speech, press, and assembly, of conscience and residence, and

entrenched the privacy of correspondence, the right of owning property, freedom of enterprise, and other bourgeois liberties. It stated that the people possessed the right to elect, but it did not say if all citizens of the country could be elected. Under the constitution, the supreme legislative body was the parliament, to which the president of the republic was answerable. But the constitution said nothing of meeting the needs of various sections of the people, of modifying or improving the material condition of the toiling mass of the people. It did not strip Qing dignitaries, feudal landlords and bureaucrats, and other reactionary elements of their political rights. On the contrary, it designated them under the head of 'the people' and accorded them the rights of 'the people'. Article 6 of Chapter 2, which enshrined the freedom of owning property, in effect sanctified the right to any form of property, including feudal. In sum, this progressive instrument of the Nanjing provisional government reflected the spirit of conciliation and compromise that moved the rising Chinese bourgeoisie and bourgeoisified landlords vis-à-vis the old feudal forces.⁵²

Despite the deficiencies and weaknesses of the 1912 provisional constitution, its progressive ideas resonated across China. It proved an effective instrument in the Chinese democratic bourgeoisie's later fight against reactionary feudal elements.

Abdication of the Qing Dynasty

The Nanjing provisional government gave priority in its policy to relations with Yuan Shikai and the peace talks with the North. It was clear by that time that there was a rough equilibrium of strength between South and North. The Chinese and Manchu reactionaries ensconced in the North were not strong enough to suppress the revolution by force, and sought salvation in negotiations. Neither could the revolutionary camp, racked as it was by internal conflict, conquer the Beijing reactionaries. The liberal bourgeoisie and the anti-Manchu Chinese landlords of Central, South and East China sought a speedy end to the revolution, and aspired to a deal with Yuan Shikai. They wanted no truck with the mass of the people and, fearing a fresh upsurge of revolution, gravitated towards compromise with the Beiyang militarists on the condition that the Qing dynasty should abdicate and China should be proclaimed a republic.

At first, Yuan Shikai was deeply alarmed by Sun Yatsen's election as provisional president of the Republic of China. He ordered Tang Shaoyi to break off the peace talks in Shanghai, and announced that the only possible basis for agreement between North and South was constitutional monarchy. Empress Long Yu, mother of boy-

emperor Pu Yi, announced on behalf of the Manchu dynasty that Pu Yi had no intention of abdicating. Forty-two leading generals of the Beiyang army, faithful to Yuan Shikai, took an oath 'to resist the republic to the end'.⁵³ The Nanjing provisional government responded by beginning to ready its troops for an offensive on Beijing. Several thousand republican troops were shipped by sea from Shanghai to the Shandong port of Yantai. Hu Ying was appointed military governor of Shandong, and another Unity League member, Bo Wenwei, was made army commander of the northern march.

Soon, however, Yuan Shikai saw that the Nanjing republican government was only going through the motions of preparing for war, and that it was ready to strike a bargain with him if he sacrificed the Qing dynasty. So he renewed the talks. Now he wanted firm assurances that he would be given the post of president once the Manchu emperor abdicated. In mid-January 1912, Yuan handed the Manchu dignitaries and Empress Long Yu the abdication terms drawn up in Nanjing. Under these terms, Emperor Pu Yi was to renounce all sovereign rights, and would have no part in forming the provisional government; the seat of the provisional government would be Nanjing. Once the republic was recognised by the foreign powers and peace in the country was restored, Sun Yatsen would resign.

On 17 and 18 January 1912, the court met in session in Beijing. The Manchu princes declared against the abdication. On the 19th, ministers of the Yuan Shikai cabinet took part in the conference, and minister of the interior Zhao Bingjun proposed that the governments in Beijing and Nanjing should be simultaneously dissolved, and a joint provisional government constituted in Tianjin.⁵⁴ The Manchu princes turned down the compromise proposal as well.

On 26 January in Beijing, revolutionaries of the Republican League assassinated General Liang Bi, leader of the Zongshedang (Ancestral party), which consisted of diehard defenders of the Qing dynasty. This struck fear into the Manchu princes and dignitaries. Some of them left Beijing in haste for the foreign concessions in Tianjin, Qingdao and other cities. The following day, the 42 Beiyang generals, close friends of Yuan Shikai, who had shortly before vowed allegiance to the Qing, demanded institution of the republican system.

On 5 February, the Nanjing assembly adopted the draft terms for the abdication of the Qing dynasty approved by Yuan Shikai: the emperor would get an annual stipend of 4 million *yuan*; the property of the emperor and princes would be protected by law; the titles of the emperor and princes would not be altered and would be recognised by the republic; members of the imperial family would enjoy the same rights as all other citizens of the republic. Yuan Shikai

tendered these terms to the Manchu court, which had no choice but to accept them.⁵⁵

On 12 February 1912, Emperor Pu Yi abdicated. His final edict ordered Yuan Shikai to form a republican provisional government. Yuan Shikai had seen to it that power should pass from the Manchu dynasty not to the Nanjing provisional government, but to himself. This was a far-reaching concession of the republicans to the reactionaries of the North. Sun Yatsen had tried to prevent it, but was denied the support of his government, whose members accused him of obstructing the peace negotiations with Yuan Shikai.

On the day of Pu Yi's abdication, Yuan Shikai sent a telegram to the Nanjing government, saying: 'I consider the republic the best system of governance... There will never again be a monarchic system in China.'⁵⁶ On 14 February, the Nanjing assembly unanimously accepted Sun Yatsen's resignation, and on the following day unanimously elected Yuan Shikai provisional president of the Republic of China. The abdication and the transfer of the post of provisional president to Yuan Shikai, representative of Chinese reactionary feudalists and international imperialism, ended the first stage of the revolution. Since the outbreak of the revolution and the abdication of the Qing dynasty occurred in the year Xinhai of the Chinese lunar calendar, it was given the name Xinhai revolution.

Policy of the Imperialist Powers at the Time of the Xinhai Revolution

During the first few days after the victorious rising and the overthrow of Manchu rule in Wuhan, the foreign consuls in Hankou adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Not until 18 October 1911, on receiving due instructions from their governments, did the consular corps in Hankou issue a statement of non-interference and 'strict neutrality' in the civil war in China in accordance with 'the principles of international law'.⁵⁷

It was not international law, of course, but other reasons that had restrained foreign states from risking an armed intervention. One reason could be traced to the contradictions that bedevilled relations between the major imperialist powers, and that would soon lead to the outbreak of World War I. The other was the massive scale of the popular movement against the Qing dynasty, and the throne's obvious inability to cope with the revolution. The behaviour and tactics of the imperialist powers in the initial period of the revolution were also moderated by the restraint of the Chinese bourgeois revolutionaries, who made no openly anti-imperialist demands and pleaded with the people to be friendly to foreigners. Following the

Wuchang uprising, foreign governments recognised that the Manchu court, which had in effect been a tool of their China policy throughout the preceding decade, had excited the hatred of the broad mass of the people and, indeed, also forfeited the trust of a large section of the propertied classes. The imperialists cast about for a more effective force to combat the Chinese revolution, and found it in the person of Yuan Shikai, the headman of internal counter-revolution.

Yuan Shikai had been suggested by the United States as the most suitable man for the top government post. The day the rising triumphed in Wuchang, William J. Calhoun, U.S. minister in Beijing, called on the regent, Prince Zai Li, and advised him to summon Yuan Shikai as 'counsellor and executive of the emperor's will'.⁵⁸ The U.S. move was instantly backed by Britain, whose economic interests lay chiefly in the southern and central regions of China engulfed by the revolutionary movement. At the end of October 1911, Sir John Jordan, the British minister to China, wrote of Yuan Shikai to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey in the following glowing terms: 'No man could be better fitted to play the role of mediator between the Chinese people, of whom he is the most trusted living representative, and the Manchu dynasty whom he and his family have served for several generations.'⁵⁹ Grey replied that the British government had 'conceived very friendly feelings and respect for Yuan Shih-kaai'.⁶⁰

The banking consortium (U.S.A., Britain, France, and Germany), too, advised the Manchu throne to put power into the hands of this 'strong man'.

Japan and tsarist Russia saw matters in a slightly different light. At first, the Japanese government was not averse to backing the anti-government movement, expecting it to weaken China, to precipitate a civil war, and to enable Japan to squeeze British and other rivals out of Central and South China. But it had never expected the revolution to spread and place in question the existence of the monarchy. It would wait no longer, and approached Britain and Russia with the offer of intervening militarily and keeping the Qing in the saddle.⁶¹ But neither Russia nor Britain thought much of the idea. Only then did the Japanese decide to back Yuan Shikai. On 23 December 1911, the Japanese minister in China assured Yuan that his country would under no circumstances recognise the southern republican government.⁶²

Tsarist Russia had no stake in strengthening the Yuan Shikai government in Beijing, and even tried to establish friendly relations with the southern republican authorities. The explanation is simple. Civil war in areas outside tsarist Russia's sphere of influence was bound to pay off in a variety of ways for it would distract the Qing

court's attention from Manchuria and Mongolia, where the Russian government was pressing for more rights and privileges. Still, reluctant to strain its relations with the Entente countries—Britain and France—tsarist Russia took a dutiful part in all collective moves to squash the revolution and promote Yuan Shikai. 'For us,' wrote Korostovets, the Russian minister in Beijing, 'it is impossible to go openly against the intentions of the friendly countries of France and Britain, to which we are linked by a number of matters of prime importance.'⁶³

Having picked Yuan Shikai for the post of premier, the imperialists did what they could to strengthen his hand. Though the Qing were suspicious of Yuan and were at first trying to control him, foreign diplomats helped him shake off the restraints placed upon him by the Manchu court, and above all the regent, Prince Zai Li. On 23 November 1911, a conference of the diplomatic corps in Beijing approved the proposal of the U.S. minister to make secure the position of Yuan Shikai and enable him to act.⁶⁴ So, Yuan was helped to compel the regent to step down on 6 December, in favour of Empress Lung Yu.

While paying lip service to 'neutrality', the imperialist states massed troops in the more important and strategic points of China, exerting military, economic, and political pressure on the revolutionary camp. By mid-November 1911, as many as 51 foreign warships with a complement of 19,000 men had come to China waters.⁶⁵ Some 7,000 foreign servicemen—Japanese, British, American, German, Russian, French, Italian, Belgian, and so on—were stationed in the metropolitan province of Zhili. On the pretext of maintaining normal traffic between Beijing and the seaports, the imperialists committed an act of undisguised military intervention and took control of the Tianjin-Shanhaiguan and Beijing-Tianjin railways.

In Central and South China, foreigners tightened their grip on the imperial maritime customs, and thereby deprived the republican authorities of an important source of revenue. Sun Yatsen was told in Paris and London (after the outbreak of the revolution, which occurred when he was in the United States, he was returning home via Europe) that no financial aid would be forthcoming for the needs of the Chinese revolution.

In connection with the peace talks that began between Yuan Shikai's negotiators and the republican camp in December 1911, the imperialist powers made a diplomatic *démarche* whose sharp edge was aimed against the revolution. On 20 December, the Shanghai consular representatives of Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia handed Wu Tingfang and Tang Shaoyi notes of identical content, demanding that the two sides reach a speedy agreement and end the civil war because it jeopardised 'the

material interests and safety of foreign nationals'.⁶⁶ The move showed how far removed the imperialists were from any true neutrality, for at that time the demand to end the civil war clearly favoured Yuan Shikai, and amounted to crude political pressure on the revolutionary camp. But the foreign powers did not stop there. They warned the revolutionaries that they would intervene in force if the negotiations dragged out.

On 3 February 1912, U.S. Secretary of State Philander C. Knox handed a note to the German ambassador in Washington, containing veiled references to collective intervention by the powers in Chinese affairs. The French government, too, suggested joint action if 'the turn of events should dash all hope of reconciliation between the contending sides seeking power in China'.⁶⁷

In January and February 1912, more foreign naval and land forces arrived in China. A large unit of U.S. troops was landed in Qingdao on 19 January, and a few days later moved to Tianjin, Luanzhou, and Tangshan. A 5,000-man U.S. expeditionary corps stationed in the Philippines was made ready to sail for China any moment.⁶⁸ In early February, the British brought in an additional two battalions and a battery of mountain artillery numbering 2,300 men.⁶⁹ Japan, too, increased the strength of its force in Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanhaiguan.

The Nanjing government repeatedly requested the foreign powers to recognise the Republic of China, but all its requests were turned down. The imperialists explained that law and order were not yet restored in China, that the revolution was not over.

In sum, the aggressive policy of the large imperialist states contributed to the fact that power shifted to Yuan Shikai.

Struggle for Power Between the Reactionary Feudal Compradores and the Republican Bourgeoisie

The transfer of presidential power to Yuan Shikai was expressive of a compromise between the republican bourgeoisie of South, East, and Central China and the reactionary feudal compradores and militarists of the North, traceable to the temporary equilibrium that had set in between them. It was not a final victory for one of the sides any more than it was a final defeat for the other: both continued the struggle in other ways and by other means.

Yuan Shikai had the backing of the feudalist forces inside the country and that of the imperialist powers outside it. The liberal bourgeois landlords had their eye on him as the strong man who would put down the revolutionary movement and keep the people in line. Yuan had his splendidly armed Northern army, and faithful

generals. His power extended to a considerable part of North China and to Beijing, the capital. So, the camp headed by him was determined to carry on. Yuan was out to strangle the democratic movement, to wipe out the political gains won by the bourgeoisie with the support of the masses, to restore the undivided rule of feudal landlords, and thereupon ensconce himself on the imperial throne. In pursuit of these aims, he set out to gradually erode the revolutionary camp, winning over the indecisive bourgeois and liberal forces in Central and South China, disbanding revolutionary troops, reinforcing his own Northern army, gradually dismissing revolutionaries from important posts in the army and the republican and provincial administrations, getting the military governors of provinces to join his side, and bribing the vacillating element among the revolutionaries.

The bourgeois republicans, for their part, hoped to avoid bloodshed and still preserve and consolidate the republican system. They had done what they could to restrict Yuan Shikai's power and to make him serve the bourgeois republic—by adopting the democratic constitution of 1912, transferring the nation's capital from Beijing to Nanjing, forming an influential parliamentary political party and a one-party government answerable to the parliament, and so on. In short, though the Qing were dethroned and a republic had been proclaimed, the question of power, that root question of the revolution, was not yet entirely settled.

Would there be a feudalist military dictatorship or would the bourgeois-democratic republican system finally come out on top? An obstinate and convulsive struggle was being fought by the counter-revolutionaries and the progressive republicans over this issue until the summer of 1913.

Having surrendered the post of provisional president to Yuan Shikai, the republicans did their utmost to put him under their control. When handing in his resignation, Sun Yatsen set the following conditions: Nanjing would still be the seat of the central government; the newly elected president must come to Nanjing in person to assume his duties; the new president must abide by the provisional constitution of the Republic of China.⁷⁰ These demands expressed the basic political line of the bourgeois republicans, who hoped to make Yuan Shikai toe the line and to forestall anti-republican action.

The question of where the capital of the republic would be was exceedingly vital and sharp. Beijing and North China were still the haunt of counter-revolutionaries and one of the chief bases of imperialist aggression. Nanjing, in the immediate vicinity of industrial Shanghai, the stronghold of the Chinese national bourgeoisie, was one of the main centres of the revolution. Choice of the capital was a crucial issue, therefore, on which hinged the future of the republic.

Backed by reactionary forces of the North and counter-revolutionaries in the South, Yuan Shikai lost no time to settle the matter in his favour.

On 14 February 1912, the Nanjing assembly succumbed to his pressure and voted 20 for to 8 against to have the central government in Beijing. Sun Yatsen came forward and fought resolutely against the decision. Following acrimonious debate, the majority took his side, and spoke out for Nanjing. It was resolved, too, to send a delegation under Cai Yuanpei to Beijing to accord the new president due honours and accompany him to Nanjing.

On the delegation's arrival in Beijing, it was showered with letters and telegrams from various Beijing government institutions and the Beijing garrison, protesting against Yuan Shikai's departure to the South. Landlords, metropolitan bureaucrats, reactionary generals, counter-revolutionary bourgeois liberals, and compradores presented a united front against Sun Yatsen and his followers. But that could not alter the resolution of the Nanjing assembly, the supreme legislative body. Yuan began looking for a 'serious' pretext not to go to Nanjing. So, on 29 February 1912, on secret orders from Yuan, the troops under Cao Kun, quartered in Beijing, started a mutiny. Blocks of streets in the capital were set afire. Hundreds of civilians perished. The following day, similar rioting broke out in Tianjin and Baoding. The diplomatic corps seized on the opportunity to bring in additional troops. Generals Duan Qirui, Feng Guozhang, and Jiang Guiti, acting on behalf of the Beiyang army, again issued demands: the capital of the republic had to be in Beijing, Yuan Shikai had no right to leave the city, and a provisional united republican government had to be formed without further delay. The southern delegates, cowed by these developments, negotiated with Yuan Shikai, then cabled Nanjing, asking it to withdraw its demand and let Beijing be the seat of the central government. Sun Yatsen was compelled to back down. On 6 March, at his suggestion, the Nanjing assembly permitted Yuan to stay in Beijing. The only condition it set was that he would have to swear loyalty to the republic in a telegram to Nanjing. On 10 March, Yuan complied. Having performed the rite, he officially assumed the duties of provisional president of the Republic of China.⁷¹

The republicans hoped their concession would be counter-balanced by the provisional constitution, which, as they saw it, could secure the republican system and prevent the president from usurping power. In fact, however, the republican constitution was more a declaration of intent than the fundamental law of the state, for it lacked the appropriate social, economic, and political base in the Chinese society of that time. The country's semi-colonial condition and the ballast of feudal relations remained intact. Bourgeois republicans lacked the requisite power to make sure that their democratic

constitution would be properly exercised.

Their leaders, it is true, were aware that the constitution alone was not enough to prevent Yuan from establishing a dictatorship. They tried to secure effective political power for themselves, and above all to have their own people in the new government. With Yuan Shikai installed as president, there had also to be a chairman of the cabinet. Sun Yatsen and his followers demanded that the chairman should be a member of the Unity League. Politicians of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang area nominated Tang Shaoyi, and instructed him to join the League. He did so on 23 March. Thereupon, with the consent of the Nanjing assembly, Yuan appointed Tang prime minister.

On 25 March, the new premier arrived in Nanjing and began forming a cabinet. The Unity League tried to retain control of the war and finance ministries. Huang Xing was nominated war minister, but on instructions from Yuan Shikai, Tang rejected his candidacy. The dispute ended in a compromise. The two ministries went to Yuan Shikai's supporters, with Duan Qirui as war minister and Xiong Xiling as minister of finance. Huang Xing was appointed commander of the southern armies not answerable to the war minister in Beijing. In addition, an understanding was reached that the post of military governor of the metropolitan province would, as the southerners wished, go to General Wang Zhixiang, a former Qing official who was now serving with the republican troops under Huang Xing.⁷² Yuan Shikai's followers were also given the posts of foreign minister (Lu Zhengxiang) and minister of the interior (Zhao Bingjun). The Unity League had only second-line posts in the new government: Cai Yuanpei was minister of education, Chen Qimei minister of industry and trade, Wang Chonghui minister of justice, and Song Jiaoren minister of agriculture and forestry. The line-up in the cabinet, as we see, was evidence of yet another major setback for the Unity League.

On 1 April 1912, Sun Yatsen issued his last edict, turning over the functions of provisional president to Yuan Shikai, and on 5 April the Nanjing assembly resolved to transfer the capital to Beijing. Ministers and members of the assembly were packing and leaving for Beijing. Sun Yatsen and his followers tried to have a 10,000-man loyal republican force under Wang Zhixiang accompany the Nanjing assembly to the North.⁷³ The bourgeois republicans clearly did not trust Yuan, feared him, and wanted their people in Beijing to have military protection. Yuan saw through the revolutionaries' device and objected. He would not, he said, allow a force of more than 2,000 into Beijing.

On 29 April, a provisional parliament convened in Beijing, formed of members of the Nanjing assembly and of deputies from provinces that had not been represented in Sun Yatsen's Nanjing government. The chief political parties in parliament and in the country were the

Unity League, the Republican Party (Gonghedang), and the Unification Party (Tongyidang).⁷⁴

The Unification Party was formed in January 1912 out of the United Society of the Chinese Republic headed by Zhang Taiyan, and the Society for Preparing the Constitution which survived from Qing times and was led by Zhang Jian. At the time of the Xinhai revolution Zhang Taiyan, who had broken off relations with the Unity League in 1909, ranged himself publicly alongside Yuan Shikai. The Unification Party represented the big bourgeoisie and liberal landlords of chiefly the Jiangsu-Zhejiang area.

The Republican Party, formed by the constitutional monarchists in May 1912, consisted of landed proprietors and merchants of Central and North China, top metropolitan officials, and officers of the Beiyang army. Its chairman was Li Yuanhong.

Both the Republican and the Unification parties were, in effect, counter-revolutionary. Their political ideal was constitutional monarchy. But the situation in the country following the revolution and the proclamation of a republic prevented them from making their aims public. They were, therefore, determined to help concentrate all power in the hands of Yuan Shikai, help him to become a dictator, so long as he would crush the revolution.

In February 1912, the Unity League adopted its new, second, programme. Sun Yatsen's important social goal, 'equal rights to land', was replaced by the abstract and vague slogan, 'to carry out a policy of state socialism'. The new programme also provided for universal education, equal political rights for men and women, regulation of finances and reorganisation of the tax system, universal conscription, local self-government, China's equality in world affairs, development of virgin lands, and assimilation of ethnic groups inhabiting China.⁷⁵

Though moderate, the Unity League programme was miles ahead of those of the other parties. The League was the only political party that opposed the one-man power of Yuan Shikai, and was a sincere champion of the republican system.

Falling back on the assistance of the imperialist powers and the Chinese reactionary camp, and making the most of the backing accorded him by liberal elements and of the weakness of the bourgeois democrats, Yuan Shikai began laying the ground for a one-man military dictatorship. At the first session of the provisional parliament of 29 April 1912—the one and only time he favoured that august body with his presence—Yuan Shikai set forth his political programme. It centred on two points: disbanding the southern revolutionary army, and contracting a large loan from the foreign powers. His purpose was more than clear: to disband the republican troops and thereby deny the bourgeois revolutionaries their chief

hold on power. The foreign loan was required to reinforce Yuan's Northern army, buy armaments, pay the salaries of officials, bribe party politicians, vacillating members of parliament, and indecisive revolutionaries.

By then, leaders of the Unity League were squarely set on the path of concessions and surrender. They did not even object to disbanding revolutionary troops in central and southern provinces, and, in fact, two-thirds of the Nanjing garrison was disbanded by June 1912. By a decree of the president of 14 June, Huang Xing was relieved of his post of commander of the southern group of armed forces. Out of the 110,000 men and officers in Wuhan only 40,000 remained.⁷⁶ In Hunan, the republican forces were reduced from 50,000 men to a mere 11,000 by October 1912.⁷⁷ But some Unity League military governors refused to disband their troops. Li Liejun and Bo Wenwei, governors of Jiangxi and Anhui, for example, kept their forces at original strength on the pretext of having to combat local bandits.

Yuan Shikai pressed for the earliest dissolution of the southern revolutionary troops, while reinforcing his own Northern army. In July 1912, Krupensky, Russian minister to Beijing, reported to St Petersburg: 'Despite his frequent statements about the need to disband the larger part of the operational armed forces, Yuan Shikai is applying this measure exclusively to the troops in the South, on which he cannot rely, and is steadily augmenting the strength of the troops quartered in Beijing, which are loyal to him.'⁷⁸

Yuan Shikai operated in intimate contact with the imperialist powers. The chief instrument the powers used in combating the revolution was their banking consortium. The moment Yuan Shikai became president, the British, French, German, and U.S. bankers who made up the consortium, granted him large advance payments out of the future large loan. Several million *yuan* were made available to the Beijing government in late February and early March 1912. Indeed, the consortium had decided to hand Yuan Shikai 6 million *yuan* monthly (from April until August 1912). Nor did the governments concerned conceal the fact that the advance payments were made 'to strengthen the power of the factual government of China against forces opposing law and order',⁷⁹ that is, to suppress the revolution. By the end of March, Japan and Russia joined the consortium, though on the proviso that Manchuria and Mongolia would be excluded from its sphere of operations.

In early May 1912, Yuan Shikai instructed finance minister Xiong Xiling to negotiate with representatives of the now six-member consortium a loan of 60 million pounds sterling. On 15 May, the bankers drew up the terms of the 'reorganisational' loan, all of them oppressive and humiliating to China: 1) the consortium shall through its representatives control the use of the loan; 2) the loan

shall be covered by the salt tax, for which purpose the consortium shall set up its own fiscal administration in China; 3) the disbandment of troops in Central and South China shall proceed under the observation of foreign officers; 4) the Chinese government shall raise no loans unless permitted by the consortium until the final issue of the 'reorganisational' loan.⁸⁰

The moment these predaceous terms became known to the general public, a wave of anger rolled across the country. On the initiative of Huang Xing and other Unity League leaders subscription was opened to an internal loan. Workers, peasants, merchants, and the men and officers of the republican troops took part in the movement. Public meetings were held in towns and villages of Central and South China. 'Colossal crowds gathered at these meetings,' the Russian consul in Hankou reported. 'There was lofty patriotic sentiment and fiery speeches, and as a result considerable sums of money were collected.'⁸¹ Women gave away valuables, coolies donated their meagre coppers. The provisional parliament, relying on the support of the people, rejected the oppressive loan, and Yuan Shikai, much against his will, was compelled to put the matter off. These developments showed that the Chinese counter-revolution and its headman, Yuan Shikai, were not strong enough yet to have all matters their own way.

The relations between premier Tang Shaoyi and president Yuan Shikai grew strained over the loan. Under pressure of the popular movement and of most members of parliament, the premier had been forced to speak against the loan. The Unity League began propagating the idea of a cabinet of ministers answerable to the parliament. And Tang Shaoyi was not averse to staying on at the head of such a government.

The relations between premier and president grew still more strained when Tang, on the insistence of the Unity League, nominated a republican, General Wang Zhixiang, to the post of governor of Hebei. Yuan Shikai and the generals of the Beiyang army objected. On 15 June, by presidential decree, Wang was sent to Nanjing to supervise the disbandment of republican troops there. The following day, Tang Shaoyi, though he did not resign officially, escaped to Tianjin. Taking advantage of his flight, Yuan decided to abolish the post of cabinet chairman. But ministers and deputies resisted his move. Yuan responded by offering the post to Xu Shichang, a double-dyed reactionary and former guardian of boy emperor Pu Yi. Parliament withheld its approval. Deputies belonging to the Unity League called for a one-party cabinet. On 29 June, countering this demand, Yuan Shikai appointed 'non-partisan' Lu Zhengxiang, who had been in diplomatic service under the Qing, prime minister. In a show of protest, ministers belonging to the Unity League resigned.

A cabinet crisis arose. The president, who had the support of the Republican and Unification parties, insisted on appointing Lu Zhengxiang head of government.

On 18 July, Lu Zhengxiang urged the parliament to endorse a list of ministers nominated by Yuan Shikai. It turned down all of them by a majority vote. Yuan appealed for help to his most faithful aiders, the Beiyang militarists. On 25 July, a conference of Beijing's military and political leaders discussed a proposal to dissolve the parliament. That day, on orders of the president, five Beiyang generals, notably the chief of Beijing's garrison Jiang Guiti, invited a group of vacillating deputies to see them. And in the morning of the following day China had a new 'parliamentary' government. The deputies, those who had 'visited' the Beiyang generals, voted as one man for the ministers handpicked by Yuan Shikai. The president also secured the election of General Feng Guozhang, a man he could trust, to the post of governor of the metropolitan province. The formation of Lu Zhengxiang's cabinet was evidence of Yuan Shikai's growing strength, and the weakness of the Unity League, which was again forced to concede defeat.

The tragedy of the bourgeois republicans derived from their failure to turn for aid and support to the mass of the people. Divorced from the masses, they surrendered one position after another, yielding to Yuan Shikai.

Yet a spontaneous popular movement was on the rise throughout the spring and summer of 1912. The republican system had not improved the lot of the masses. As before, peasants and urban toilers languished under the yoke imposed by landlords and bureaucrats. The taxes that had been abolished in the initial stage of the revolution were being reintroduced, and this included the *liqin*. More, some taxes were even higher than they had been in Qing times. This spurred the masses, especially the peasants, to action against the new authorities. Disorders were registered in Guangdong, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Henan, and other provinces. They ranged from peasants refusing to pay rent to landlords, armed actions by local secret societies, and so on, to killing of officials and foreign missionaries. Larger risings, too, occurred, such as the spontaneous insurrection in Henan under the leadership of Bai Lang, which spread across a number of provinces in Central and North China towards the end of 1913 and in the first six months of 1914. The most widespread slogans were, 'Smite the rich, help the poor', and 'Take from the rich, distribute to the poor'.⁸² They reflected the people's disappointment and resolve to settle scores with the oppressors. Among the most downtrodden there rang out the call for a 'second revolution'. This was the demand in Guangdong, where a fairly broad popular movement sprang up in the spring of 1912, seeking the over-

throw of the bourgeois-landlord republican authorities.⁸³

Capitalising on the political freedoms proclaimed in the provisional constitution of 1912, industrial workers flung themselves into the strike struggle. Some ten strikes were recorded in Shanghai from July 1912 to June 1913, and 24 in the rest of China.⁸⁴ Trade unions began appearing in Shanghai and other large Chinese industrial cities. Though in most cases they were headed by watchdogs of the capitalists, they struck fear not only into Yuan Shikai, but also into leaders of the Unity League.

A succession of soldiers' mutinies swept across the land. Frequently, they were headed by members of the very revolutionary organisations that had participated in the overthrow of the Manchus. The soldiers, too, were displeased with the results of the revolution, and demanded the dismissal of odious military governors and generals. Disorders were especially frequent in the Hubei army. Large-scale armed clashes occurred in Wuchang in February and June 1912.⁸⁵ They were motivated by the soldiers' wish to drive out Li Yuanhong, and a big part in the risings was played by General Zhang Zhenwu, deputy chief of the Wuchang government's military administration. But the armed actions of the revolutionary part of the Hubei troops were defeated. Li Yuanhong showed no mercy in dealing with the plotters. Furthermore, he forbade both men and officers to be members of any society.

The spontaneous attempts of the masses to carry on the revolution were resisted not only by counter-revolutionary elements, but also by bourgeois republicans and their leading political force, the Unity League. Popular risings and disorders were mercilessly crushed by feudalists and liberal bourgeois landlords in the North, and by members of the Unity League heading local administrations in the South. In Guangdong, for example, Hu Hanmin and Chen Jiongmeng sent punitive details to various counties in the province to put down peasant revolts.⁸⁶ In Shanghai, Chen Qimei suppressed industrial strikes and, among other things, disbanded the Amalgamated Union of Mechanics, then the largest Chinese trade union, founded by the workers of the Jiangnan Arsenal in May 1912. Tan Yankai in Hunan, Zhang Fenghui in Shenxi, and Yan Xishan in Shanxi—these old and new-fledged Unity League personalities—were obstinate and ardent defenders of landlords and corrupt officials.

Despite the upswing of popular movements, the revolution was, on the whole, swiftly rolling to its doom. The proletariat, which had not yet grown into an independent political force in China, could not step into the breach as the hegemon of revolution. And the bourgeois republicans, who had severed their ties with the mass of the people, were surrendering more and more ground to the counter-revolution.

This, cumulatively, was helping Yuan Shikai to hew his way forward as military dictator. The foreign powers were prodding him to suppress the Chinese revolution. In early August 1912, speaking on behalf of the diplomatic corps, the Japanese minister in China demanded that Yuan put a stop to 'anarchy', meaning revolution. Krupensky reported to St Petersburg that 'the powers would be pleased if Yuan Shikai established a dictatorship, even if it were to repose on armed force and open an era of militarism in China'.⁸⁷ The imperialists' standpoint gave Yuan Shikai wings. On 16 August, he summoned General Zhang Zhenwu and Colonel Fang Wei, two distinguished Wuchang revolutionaries, to Beijing and had them shot without trial. This brutal act was meant not only to eliminate staunch political adversaries, but also to test the strength and resolve of the bourgeois republicans.

The execution of Zhang Zhenwu and Fang Wei set off a storm of indignation among forward-looking people all over the country. Meetings and demonstrations of protest were held in the cities of Central and South China. The situation was especially tense in Wuchang. 'The excitement in Wuchang,' wrote *Russkoye slovo* on 5 (18) August 1912, 'is reminiscent of the atmosphere at the height of the Chinese revolution. Speakers at street meetings are calling on the people to exterminate all traitors, and first of all Yuan Shikai.'

Ardent speeches were delivered in the parliament, denouncing the arbitrary behaviour of the government. But it was little more than a storm in a tea-cup. The parliament demanded that all members of the cabinet should come to its session, or at least the premier and the war minister, and that they should explain the reasons for the execution of Zhang Zhenwu and Fang Wei. But the government took no notice. It sent two minor officials, whom the deputies refused to hear.

Again, the leaders of the Unity League tried to settle the conflict by peaceful means. On 24 August, Sun Yatsen came to Beijing to negotiate with Yuan Shikai. A little later, Huang Xing joined in the talks. The republican leaders' chief motive was to hammer out a common line with Yuan Shikai in home and foreign policy, and thereby normalise the exceedingly tense political climate in China. The negotiations lasted a few weeks and culminated in an official agreement, which essentially amounted to the following: to set up a strong centralised government; to reduce military expenditures to the minimum; to conduct an open-door policy and encourage foreign interests to put money into railway construction, development of mineral wealth, and into the iron-and-steel industry; to put the fiscal system in order; to promote national industry and trade; to try and put an end to party differences and to maintain peace and order, thus setting the foreign powers at ease so that they should recognise the Republic of China.⁸⁸

In effect, Sun Yatsen and Huang Xing did not object to Yuan Shikai's concentrating power in his own hands, to his disbanding the army, and to letting foreign capital gain a still tighter stranglehold on the Chinese economy. They also agreed that the struggle between the political parties should be blunted, something that Yuan Shikai so eagerly sought. The document furnished Chinese counter-revolutionaries with a made-to-order instrument against the republicans.

At the talks, Yuan Shikai acquitted himself as a shrewd and resourceful diplomat, posing as a friend of the republic and the people. When Sun Yatsen referred to the crying need for settling the agrarian question, he pretended to be in complete accord, though as a zealous champion of feudal landlords he was little concerned about the needs of the peasants. He was merely out to mislead Sun Yatsen. And he succeeded to a point.

On his return to Shanghai, Sun Yatsen addressed a meeting of his party on 5 October 1912, and praised Yuan Shikai as a suitable president. 'At present,' he said, 'the views of Mr Yuan coincide with ours. Yet in the South there are still doubts about the sincerity of Mr Yuan. Many think that he is merely posing as a republican. I emphatically declare that Mr Yuan's intentions are entirely sincere. After the exchange of opinion we have had on political matters, I no longer have any doubts as to the correctness of what we did. Mr Yuan is a statesman, and everything he does is done for the good of the state. That can be believed.'⁸⁹

Coming from the most popular and prestigious republican leader, this assessment of Yuan Shikai led many people astray. The masses and the rank-and-file members of the Unity League had often expressed strong distaste for Yuan Shikai: he was being publicly accused of wanting to be a dictator and monarch. Sun Yatsen's statement tended to blunt this view, and to some extent misled the party and the republican masses, helping the dictator to tighten his grip on power. Sun Yatsen's mistaken opinion of Yuan Shikai's intentions was also evidently one of the reasons why he shifted his attention from the political field to the country's economic development. He worked out a ten-year plan of railway construction providing for 100,000 km of new track. And to put it into effect, Yuan Shikai appointed him director-general of railways on 9 September 1912. Yuan knew perfectly well that the plan was a day-dream, no more, but was pleased to let it distract the leader of the Chinese revolution from politics.

Still, Sun Yatsen's trust in Yuan Shikai was not complete. One of the reasons for his trip to Beijing was to win the support of members of parliament for his idea of moving the capital to the South. He motivated this with the constant threat of foreign interference in the affairs of the central government so long as its seat was in Beijing.⁹⁰

Another reason for the trip was to reorganise the Unity League into the Guomindang (National Party). The founding of the new party was impelled by the preparations for elections to the formal parliament, set for 10 December 1912 (first round) and 10 January 1913 (second round).

Unity League leaders attached prime importance to the coming elections, and were spurred by the aim of winning a majority in the parliament that would work out a new constitution to replace the provisional one, and form a responsible one-party cabinet. They hoped thus to limit the powers of their chief rival, Yuan Shikai. And they felt that to achieve this aim they would need a broader and more massive political party than the Unity League.

The leading part in the reorganisation was played by Song Jiaoren. He drew up a fairly clear, though extremely moderate, programme. Its central idea was to form a 'good government' that would pursue a 'good policy'. In Song Jiaoren's opinion, Yuan Shikai's government was far short of the mark. None but a 'national party' could shape the right home and foreign policy. The party would hasten the elaboration of a formal constitution, one that would provide for the establishment of a one-party cabinet answerable to the parliament, for the introduction of local self-government, and for the appointment of the right kind of officials in the provinces. In home policy, Song Jiaoren's programme envisaged separation of civil from military power, a clear division of functions between the central government and local administrations, a build-up of the armed forces, enlargement of military industries, rectification of financial matters, development of industry, notably those fields that would eliminate the need for imports from abroad, rapid construction of railways, promotion of education, and so on.

All these objectives of the Guomindang were centred, ultimately, on putting China on the road of capitalist development. No far-reaching social change was envisaged. The programme was confined to just very general and superficial demands. Rectification of financial matters and taxation, for example, was conceived as just abolishing the *liqin*, establishing a state budget and a central state bank empowered to issue money, and implementing a series of other, less significant, measures. In the field of foreign policy, Song Jiaoren envisaged maintaining the same relations with foreign powers as before, because, as he saw it, China was not strong enough yet to alter them.

These provisions became the fabric of the official five-point programme that the Guomindang adopted at its inaugural assembly in Beijing on 25 August 1912: 1) to promote and complete the country's political unification; 2) to promote local self-government; 3) to promote the assimilation of China's ethnic populations; 4) to

promote public education, and 5) to maintain international peace.⁹¹

The programme of the Guomindang was one more retreat from the second programme of the Unity League. The aim of securing China's equality on the international scene gave way to the pledge of maintaining international peace. The slogan of equality for men and women vanished altogether. The interests of the many millions of Chinese peasants were, as in the second programme of the Unity League, consigned to oblivion. This indeterminate liberal platform enabled the Unity League to come to terms with the other four, less numerous, political organisations of the republican bourgeoisie, and to join them in the new party. The Guomindang represented essentially the interests of the middle and big bourgeoisie of mainly the South and East. Still, despite its moderately liberal nature, the edge of the Guomindang programme was directed against Yuan Shikai and the political parties that were working, in the final count, to tear down the republic and set up a feudalist military dictatorship. The main body of the Guomindang's membership was resolved to defend and consolidate the republican system. With the reactionary forces in China ferociously attacking the bourgeois democratic movement and straining to re-establish undivided political rule of feudal lords, this aspect in the Guomindang's activity retained all its progressive relevance. But the attempts of the bourgeois republicans to reach the goals in isolation from, even in spite of, the broad mass of the people held no promise of success and, naturally, failed. The failure was complete.

The Anti-Yuan Shikai Rising in Central and South China, and the Defeat of the Revolution

The moment their party was set up, the Guomindang people launched an energetic election campaign. Their slogans were two: form a responsible one-party government, and transfer the capital to Nanjing. The movement for a new capital was especially intense in Shanghai, the main stronghold of the Guomindang. A Society of Defenders of the Parliamentary System sprang up there, agitating for the convocation of a parliament in the South. It advanced the proposal that newly elected deputies from the central and southern provinces should assemble in Nanjing rather than go to Beijing. Guomindang agitators were sent to all corners of the land.

Yuan Shikai was badly disturbed. In early January 1913, he ordered Cheng Dequan, military governor of Jiangsu, to apply force against the Society of Defenders, and to arrest its leaders.⁹² Sun Yatsen took a resolute stand against this order. He warned Yuan that if any repressions were launched, the movement for a new capital

would take on formidable proportions. Cheng Dequan, too, refused to carry out the president's order, and begged him to exercise greater caution and prudence. Yuan, however, continued his preparations to entrench himself as one-man dictator. On 8 January, in defiance of the constitution, he issued a decree reforming provincial administrations, and abolishing elections of top provincial officials, who were henceforth to be appointed by the central government. Yuan also instructed the provisional provincial councils, the highest bodies of local power, to take guidance in the provisional regulations governing provincial consultative assemblies which dated back to Qing times shortly before the revolution, with the sole reservation that articles 'contrary to the principles of the republican system' should be ignored.⁹³ Yuan's decree defied the bourgeois republicans' plank of promoting local self-government, and vested military governors, whose power base were the armed forces, with additional prerogatives.

Chinese warlordism had begun to take root in the period of the Xinhai revolution. And Yuan Shikai, who had inherited leadership of the Beiyang clique after Li Hongzhang's death, was the most vivid and sinister exponent of that peculiar social phenomenon. The main reasons for the militarist system in China were rooted in the country's economic and political dependence on the imperialist powers, on the one hand, and the erosion of centralised government, the predominance of feudalistic relationships, and the warped development of capitalism in the country, on the other. The economically and politically weak Chinese bourgeoisie was not strong enough to build an effective centralised republican state on the ruins of the feudal empire. Military leaders, commanders of government and provincial troops, forged into prominence in political affairs. As the Manchu empire began sinking, imperialists and local reactionaries seized on monarchist General Yuan Shikai, founder of the New Army, and made him their tool in the battle against the Chinese revolution.

Relying on his army and manoeuvring skilfully between the revolutionaries and the Qing throne, Yuan rapidly captured power in North China. In the provinces, men of substance frightened by the revolution and the erosion of centralised rule, cast about for an armed force that would safeguard their place of privilege and protect them from the fury of popular insurrections and riots. And they found it in the persons of the military governors whom the revolution had pushed to the forefront of events or, failing this, in the persons of willing officers of lesser rank who had their own troops. In 1913, for example, a former chief of a band of brigands in Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin, used the troops under his command to instal himself in power in the province of Fengtian and, thereupon, with

Japanese support, extended it to the rest of Manchuria. The troops under their command also enabled Lu Rongting in Guangxi, Yan Xishan in Shanxi, and Cai E in Yunnan to gradually convert the provinces placed under their supervision into feudalistic militarist domains of their own. In early 1912, Tang Jiyao led his troops from Yunnan to Guizhou, deposed the government formed there during the anti-Manchu rising, and established himself there as military governor. And the support of these local warlords, along with that of commanders of units of the Beiyang army, gave Yuan Shikai muscle in his struggle against the bourgeois republicans.

Yuan was apprehensive of the behaviour of the Guomindang governor of Jiangxi, Li Liejun. The latter, a devotee of republicanism and a realistic politician, did not trust the president and was preparing for armed struggle against the Beiyang troops. He conducted affairs independently, paying little attention to the instructions and orders he received from Beijing. On one occasion, for example, he purchased 7,000 rifles and 3 million cartridges abroad.⁹⁴ When the lot was delivered from Shanghai to Jiujiang, the Beijing government ordered the local authorities to detain the cargo. Li Liejun sent an armed detail, which took possession of the arms and ammunition by force. In mid-January, the Beijing government, in a bid to restrict the powers of Li Liejun, sent a civilian governor to Jiangxi, named Wang Rongkai. Li made matters so difficult for Wang that the latter returned to the capital a few days later. On 16 January 1913, the council of ministers sent telegrams to all provincial governors, censuring the conduct of Li Liejun. Still, Yuan Shikai was afraid to act openly and remove the disobedient governor from his post.⁹⁵

For Yuan, the behaviour of Li Liejun and the Guomindang agitation to remove the capital to Nanjing were a direct threat to his counter-revolutionary designs. He set out, therefore, to gain the support of the more moderate governors of the South. Late in January 1913, a telegram from the military governors of Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Sichuan, pledged support for Yuan's fight against the Guomindang. The warlords promised to devote all their strength to the struggle 'against people who were only seeking a propitious moment to divide China'.⁹⁶ This attitude of men who were considered supporters of the Guomindang, comforted Yuan. The Guomindang leadership, on the other hand, thought the matter of little moment. They were still under the sway of parliamentary illusions. In the elections to the formal parliament they had emerged clear winners, having captured as many as 392 seats in the two chambers, and in addition several dozen seats were won by Guomindang men simultaneously enrolled in other parties. The Guomindang's chief rival, the Republican Party, won only 175 seats.⁹⁷

Workers, the urban poor, and a large portion of peasants had been

wholly denied participation in the elections. The bulk of electors—the urban petty bourgeoisie and prosperous peasantry—cast their ballots for the Guomindang, the only political party that opposed Yuan Shikai. This was what swung the elections. And the Guomindang leaders now held that they would take control by legal means. The moment the outcome of the elections became known, they announced that the Guomindang would form its own government, with the post of premier going to Song Jiaoren. Yuan Shikai faced the choice of either abdicating power voluntarily or crushing the Guomindang by armed force and putting an end to the revolution. He chose the latter course, all the more so because at the time the effective relation of strength, both class strength and military, had tilted in favour of the feudalist counter-revolution.

Though directly before the abdication of the Qing dynasty there had been a certain equilibrium of strength between the revolution and the counter-revolution, the year that passed since then had wrought a significant change. For all its popularity, the camp of bourgeois republicans was considerably weaker. The reason was that while in the first or armed stage of the revolution (October 1911–February 1912), the bourgeois revolutionaries locked in struggle with the Manchu monarchy relied on the people, the people's army, they had later forfeited this source of strength. Their conciliatory policy vis-à-vis counter-revolutionaries, and their policy of renouncing, even combating, movements of the common people, had turned large numbers of the latter in town and countryside against them. The large revolutionary army that came into being during the overthrow of the Manchu monarchy had, in effect, been disbanded. Yuan Shikai's Beiyang army, on the other hand, was considerably expanded with the assistance of the powers.

The liberal bourgeoisie and landlords, who had engaged in a power struggle with revolutionaries in the initial stage of the revolution, thought too cautious and far-sighted to break off relations with them, became Yuan Shikai's all but whole-hearted supporters after the dethronement of the Qing, helping him in his fight against the Guomindang and in crushing the democratic movement. Soon after the Guomindang's victory in the elections, their political parties—the Democratic Party (Minzhudang) and the Unification Party—joined hands with the Republican Party to form a single counter-revolutionary political organisation, the Progressive Party (Jinbudang), which helped Yuan to instal himself as military dictator. The Democratic Party had been formed in November 1912 as a counterweight to the Guomindang. Its leaders were Liang Qichao and Tang Hualong, leading lights of the constitutionalist movement at the time of the Qing.

Besides, during the years of relatively bloodless struggle against

the bourgeois republicans, Yuan Shikai succeeded in winning over a number of military governors in Central and South-East China, and that, too, strengthened his hand.

The imperialist powers were, at all times, supporters of reaction in China. The banking consortium made clear that Yuan Shikai could count on a large loan to suppress the revolution. Until the spring of 1913, Yuan did not take up the offer for he did not feel strong enough yet to cope with the nation and the bourgeois republicans despite the foreign financial backing (though he did not hesitate to accept the consortium's subsidies for his Northern army and for otherwise tightening his grip on power). Now, feeling that the scales had tilted in his favour, he flung down the gauntlet.

On 20 March 1913, by Yuan's secret order, an attempt was made on Song Jiaoren's life in Shanghai. On 22 March, Song succumbed to his wounds. Learning of the dastardly assassination, Sun Yatsen called for armed struggle against the usurper-president.⁹⁸ But the other Guomindang leaders, notably Huang Xing, would not back him. Huang held that in the republican environment, with the newly elected parliament coming to the fore, even the conflict over Song Jiaoren's killing could be settled without bloodshed.⁹⁹

Yuan Shikai, meanwhile, was priming for civil war. On 7 April, he covertly ordered a partial mobilisation in North China. By a presidential decree of 23 April, the premier and the ministers of foreign affairs and finance were to take up the foreign loan. The men of the Guomindang were deeply angered by the president's arbitrary decision. Sun Yatsen visited the British consul in Shanghai and informed him that if the loan were granted, it would cause an irreparable break between North and South.¹⁰⁰ Wang Zhengting, deputy chairman of the upper chamber of parliament, called at the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank where the foreign bankers were negotiating with Yuan Shikai's representatives and warned that 'the loan could never be recognised by the parliament'.¹⁰¹ But the deal was closed all the same. In the early hours of 27 April, without the consent and contrary to the wishes of the parliament, Yuan Shikai's ministers accepted a loan of 25 million pounds sterling from the consortium of Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and tsarist Russia on highly onerous terms.

On 20 March 1913, a little over a month before the deal was closed, the United States had withdrawn from the consortium. The U.S. government explained that it would have nothing to do with a loan that was contrary to China's independence. The true facts of the case were, however, that at a sitting of the six powers on 4 March 1913 no American had been elected to the board that would supervise disposal of the loan. This went against American's wishes of having a say in, if not dominating, the consortium. In the circum-

stances, it felt there was more to be gained from leaving itself a free hand in China rather than accept the role of an obscure participant in the consortium. The 'concern' that Wilson's administration claimed to feel for China's 'independence' was belied soon after, when the United States became the first of the large imperialist powers to officially recognise Yuan Shikai's counter-revolutionary government (on 2 May 1913). This was an act of political support with far-reaching consequences.

Lenin pointed an accusing finger at the counter-revolutionary essence of the loan given to Yuan Shikai by the imperialist powers. 'A new Chinese loan,' he wrote, 'has been concluded *against* Chinese democracy: "Europe" is for Yüan Shih-kai, who is preparing a military dictatorship.... What if the Chinese people do not recognise the loan? China, after all, is a republic, and the majority in parliament are *against* the loan.'

'Oh, then, "advanced" Europe will raise a cry about "civilisation", "order", "culture" and "fatherland"! It will set the *guns* in motion and, in alliance with Yüan Shih-kai, that adventurer, traitor and friend of reaction, crush a republic in "backward" Asia.'¹⁰²

The loan, contracted against the wishes of the parliament was a direct challenge to the republican system and the initial act in Yuan's coup d'état. Having once committed this breach of constitutional law, Yuan Shikai felt free to spurn the parliament, and only waited for a convenient opportunity for dissolving it.

At that hour of trial, the Guomindang proved wanting in determination to repulse the militarist reactionaries. The party lacked unity. Those who represented the big bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the middle bourgeoisie, including Huang Xing, were reluctant to acknowledge the inevitability of a clean break with Yuan Shikai, and were still inclined to seek a peaceable solution. A considerable number of Guomindang deputies in Beijing did not want to lose their lucrative seats in parliament, and also favoured 'lawful' constitutional methods. Sun Yatsen's left wing stood for immediate armed action. But it represented a minority. Sun urged Hu Hanmin and Chen Jiongming to take armed action against Yuan Shikai's regime in Guangdong, but both of them refused. Some time later, Sun instructed Chen Qimei to act in Shanghai, and he, too, demurred.

In the meantime, Yuan Shikai was actively preparing for an armed suppression of the republican South. In May, a few Beiyang divisions were deployed by the Beijing-Hankou railway to Wuhan, and from there along the Yangzi to the border of Jiangxi province. The arms stocked in the Hanyang Arsenal were removed to the North, and the Hanyang munitions plants were put under the control of the president's personal troops brought in from Beijing. Beiyang troops were also stationed in Shanghai. From Shandong, monarchist general

Zhang Xun took his troops to Yangzhou, an important strategic point at the approaches to Nanjing. Thirty-two warships loyal to Beijing were anchored off Shanghai, Nanjing, Jiujiang, and Hankou. This in addition to some 40 cruisers and gunboats of various foreign navies.¹⁰³

The resolute offensive mounted by the Chinese reactionaries and their headman Yuan Shikai created confusion in the Guomindang camp. On 9 May 1913, Huang Xing said publicly that the parliament had no choice but to approve the 'reorganisational' loan. Some time later, the Guomindang stated in a manifesto to the people of China that it would acknowledge the loan on the provision that the government would let the parliament decide how it was to be spent. This was one more abject Guomindang concession, made in the hope of a compromise with Yuan Shikai. But the latter no longer had any use for the bourgeois republicans. Now, he was out to crush the revolution. On 15 May, Yuan stripped Huang Xing of the rank of army general he had himself bestowed in September 1912. On 9 June, he dismissed military governor Li Liejun, and then also the governors Bo Wenwei and Hu Hanmin.¹⁰⁴

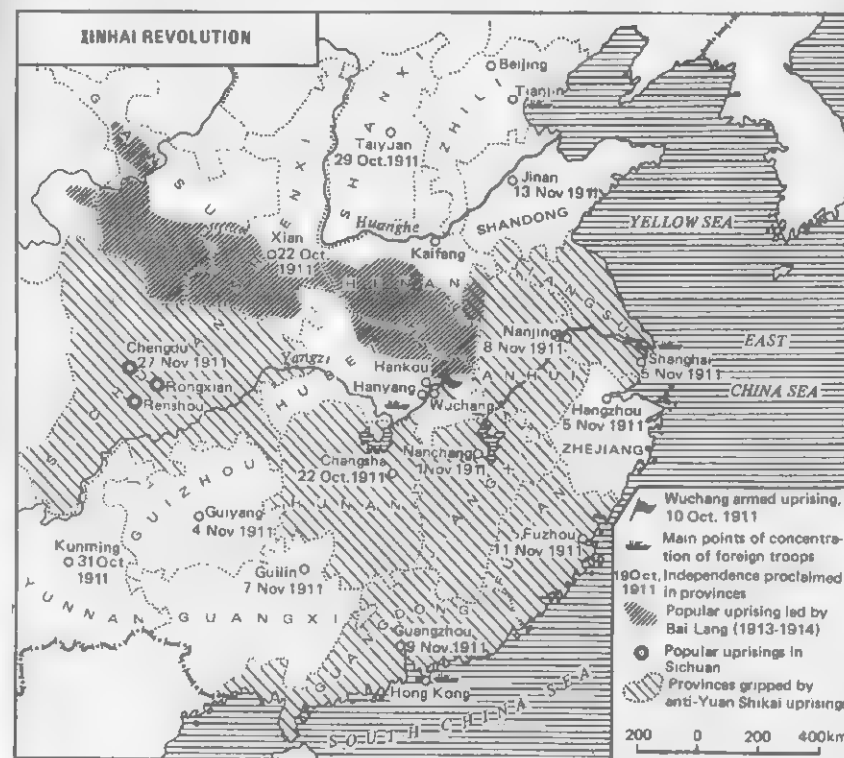
Li Liejun came to Shanghai, where he and Sun Yatsen drew up a plan of an anti-Yuan uprising. When leaving Jiangxi, Li had taken due preparatory measures and, among other things, sent dependable troops to occupy Jiujiang, which was menaced by Beiyang units. On 12 July, after returning to Jiangxi, Li Liejun officially announced that he would begin armed operations against Yuan Shikai.¹⁰⁵ That gave the start to an uprising of troops faithful to the republican ideal, the start to a 'second revolution'.

The strength of the belligerents was unequal. The advantage held by Yuan Shikai's forces lay less in the military superiority of the Northern army, and more in the backing of feudal landlords, compradores, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the foreign powers. The bourgeois republicans, on the other hand, who had conceded point after point to the counter-revolution, and who had consigned the interests of the working people to oblivion, stood quite alone. By the summer of 1913, peasants, workers, and urban poor were wholly indifferent to the Guomindang's call to overthrow usurper Yuan Shikai and defend the republic. Hundreds of thousands had responded to the call to battle in the autumn of 1911. Nothing even remotely similar occurred in the summer of 1913. There was no surge of popular support when the republicans finally made up their minds to put up a stand. And that was the chief reason for the defeat that lay in store for them.

Huang Xing arrived in Nanjing from Shanghai on 14 July, and the following day persuaded Cheng Dequan to declare the independence of Jiangsu. On 17 July, Bo Wenwei started an uprising in Anhui, but

was soon compelled to flee because his commanders, as he discovered, had been bought by Yuan Shikai. On 18 July, Chen Jiongming, who had been appointed military governor of Guangdong in place of Hu Hanmin, proclaimed the province independent. He wanted to send troops to help Li Liejun, but some of his generals refused to budge from the province. Chen retaliated by arresting a few of them, but this caused discontent among the troops. On 4 August, he himself had had to take to his heels. At the close of July, the authorities in Zhejiang and Hunan declared their independence from Beijing. On 4 August, the Guomindang general Xiong Kewu started an uprising in Chongqing, and won the support of a few Sichuan counties. But the provincial government in Chengdu remained loyal to Yuan Shikai.

Battles between government troops and those faithful to the republic broke out at three points—in Jiangxi (in the Jiujiang-Hukou area), Nanjing, and Shanghai (Map 7). In the early hours of 23 July,



Map 7

revolutionary units mounted an attack on Shanghai's Jiangnan Arsenal. The fighting lasted for four days, but when the smoke of battle cleared the Northern army was still in control. And by early August, the republicans had relinquished nearly all the major strongholds, with the conspicuous exception of the Wusong forts. But these, too, fell on 14 August. The Northern troops had had the help of the imperialist powers. German gunboats had undertaken the job of reconnaissance. The British anchored their battleships near the Wusong forts, and these did not leave their stations despite the repeated requests of the revolutionaries. Indeed, British sailors helped government troops to land at Wusong. The Japanese newspaper *Tokyo nitiniti shimbun*, commented on 1 August 1913 that at Shanghai the southerners had had to fight against three armies, those of the North, of Germany, and of Britain.

The chief war theatre was in Jiangxi. Here the contending parties committed their main forces. On 24 July, Beiyang troops under General Duan Zhigui mounted an attack on the city and port of Hukou. Under the onslaught of the numerically superior enemy, Li Liejun surrendered this strategically important point in the Yangzi valley on 28 July. The following day, Huang Xing abandoned Nanjing, for he had come to the conclusion that the uprising was failing. By so doing, he in effect capitulated to Yuan Shikai. Cheng Dequan hastened to declare his loyalty to Beijing. A few days later, however, He Haimin removed him from the governorship and again proclaimed the independence of Jiangsu province. Still, the plight of the revolutionary forces was nothing less than disastrous. On 9 August, Fujian revoked its independence, and Hunan followed suit on 13 August. Towards the end of the month large-scale fighting broke out for Nanjing. On 2 September, Zhang Xun's army captured the city for Yuan Shikai, and on the 14th Song Kewu was defeated at Chongqing, the last of the centres of the republican uprising.

Yuan Shikai's Beijing government now extended its powers to Central and South China. The headman of the clique of Beiyang warlords was in all but complete control of the country. In class substance his government was a dictatorship of feudal lords and the compradore bourgeoisie, backed squarely by the imperialist powers. The parliament turned into an obedient tool of the dictator, who could dissolve it at any moment if that suited his fancy. He refrained from doing it for the sole reason that he wished to become an officially elected formal president of China.

Thus, the revolution of 1911-1913 ended in the total suppression of the anti-Yuan Shikai uprising.

Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang at the Time of the Revolution

The peculiar twists of the revolutionary movement in Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang had their origin in the unequal conditions of the peoples inhabiting these regions which were once forcibly incorporated in the Qing Empire, and, indeed, in the aggressive policies of the imperialist powers.

On the eve of the Xinhai revolution, anti-Chinese and anti-Manchu feelings ran very high among various sections of the Mongolian people. To begin with, they could not reconcile themselves to the massive influx of Chinese settlers into Mongolia encouraged by the Manchu throne in the last few years of its rule, for it resulted in still greater oppression of Mongol working people and deprived Mongol feudal lords of many of their privileges. Besides, the move was accompanied by a build-up of Qing troops.

In July 1911, leading Mongol secular and spiritual lords gathered at a secret conference in Urga, presided over by the head of the Lamaist church, the *bogdo-gegen*. The conference resolved to secede from China, and to send a special delegation to Russia to negotiate aid. The *bogdo-gegen*'s envoys arrived in St Petersburg in mid-August, and handed Russia's foreign minister S.D. Sazonov a letter proposing a treaty that would recognise Mongolia's independence. The tsarist government promised to support the Mongol feudal lords' struggle against the Qing, but turned down the plan for Outer Mongolia's complete secession from China and the incorporation of Barga and Inner Mongolia in Outer Mongolia.

Leaning for support on the national liberation movement of the Mongol *arat* herdsmen, who opposed the Qing authorities and the influx of Chinese settlers, and making the most of the Russian tsar's support, the Mongol princes and lamas took advantage of the revolution in China to perform an anti-Qing coup and declare Mongolia's independence from the Qing Empire. That was on 1 December 1911. The Chinese garrison in Urga, indifferent to the fate of the Qing dynasty, withdrew without firing a shot. The Manchu *amban*, Sanduo, and other high officials fled in haste to China.

In the Kobdo area, however, where the Qing had a large garrison, matters took on a different complexion. The Mongol feudal lords did not drive out the Manchus from there until the battle was joined by Mongol *arats*. The city and fort were captured by the insurgent *arats* in August 1912.¹⁰⁶ The rebels ransacked the shops and warehouses of Chinese merchants and money-lenders, and tore up promissory notes and account books. With the fall of Kobdo, all Outer Mongolia was free of the Manchu yoke. Princes and top lamas, who had their eyes turned to tsarist Russia, took over power.

After the fall of the Manchu dynasty in China, the tsarist government entered into negotiations with Beijing concerning the future of Outer Mongolia. The talks dragged on through 1912, and proved unsuccessful. Yuan Shikai refused to recognise the secession of Mongolia from China and to grant Mongolia internal autonomy.

Taking advantage of the tension in Russo-Chinese relations, the Japanese government demanded in January 1912 that Russia acknowledge Japan's special interests in Inner Mongolia. Under a secret Russo-Japanese agreement concluded on 8 July 1912, Inner Mongolia was declared a Japanese 'sphere of influence'.

Seeing that it would not reach agreement with China, tsarist Russia decided to further its designs by negotiating directly with the government of Outer Mongolia. On 3 November 1912, a Russo-Mongolian agreement was signed in Urga, under which the tsarist government promised to help Mongolia retain its autonomy, to help it form Mongol armed forces, and not to allow China to bring in its troops. The agreement set off an outcry all over China. Yuan Shikai launched preparations for a military expedition to Outer Mongolia. But in the summer of 1913, the tsarist government deployed its forces in Kobdo region and compelled the Beijing authorities to recall the troops they had sent to the borders of Outer Mongolia. Yuan Shikai was afraid that armed action against the Mongols could precipitate a war with Russia. He was also aware, of course, that to settle scores with the revolution at home he had to have the support of the foreign powers, Russia included.

The negotiations that ensued between Russia and China culminated in a Russo-Chinese declaration signed on 5 November 1913, which reaffirmed and recognised the Russo-Mongolian agreement of 3 November 1912.¹⁰⁷ The emergence of an autonomous Mongolia—for all its inequality and dependence on the regime of the Russian tsar—led to closer ties between the Mongol people and Russia, then the chief centre of the international revolutionary movement. This opened an avenue to Mongolia for advanced ideas of democracy and socialism, and of friendship and co-operation among nations. The autonomy was also an important step towards recovery of Mongol statehood, an unquestionably progressive development in the history of the Mongol people.

When word of the revolution in China reached Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, part of the Chinese garrison took the republican side, and left Tibet for home. Though the Manchu Lian Yu, resident in Tibet of the Beijing government, managed formally to retain his post, by the end of 1911 power in the country was, in effect, taken over by the local government.

Following the abdication of the Manchu emperor and the election of provisional president Yuan Shikai, Lian Yu in a proclamation in

Lhasa informed the people of Tibet that the republican form of government would be instituted in the country (March 1912). The change consisted in a number of merely formal alterations in the upper echelons of Tibet's feudal theocratic government machinery. Nothing changed in the condition of the Tibetan people, who saw Chinese officials as their oppressors. Anti-Chinese popular actions occurred at some points, but leadership was quickly seized by local feudal lords, who accepted the guidance of the pro-British eighth Dalai Lama.

In April 1912, Yuan Shikai granted Tibet the status of a province of China. Capitalising on the anti-Chinese feeling of the people, the Tibetan feudal lords launched armed operations against Chinese troops quartered in Tibet. In April and May 1912, Chinese garrisons of a number of Tibetan towns were disarmed and expelled. The British colonial administration in India rendered the Tibetan feudal lords all possible aid. And on 10 May 1912, the British started an undisguised armed intervention in Tibet.

In June 1912, the Beijing government despatched troops to Tibet under command of Sichuan's military governor, Yin Changheng. A little later, Yunnan troops were brought in. In July, the Chinese scored a series of victories over Tibetan detachments. The British imperialists were disturbed and disappointed. On 17 August 1912, Sir John Jordan, British minister in Beijing, informed the Chinese government on the instructions of foreign secretary Grey that Britain would allow neither the replacement by Chinese of administrative offices in Tibet nor the doctrine announced by Yuan Shikai identifying Tibet with a Chinese province.¹⁰⁸ Yuan Shikai backed down in face of this British pressure, and stopped the advance of Chinese troops into Tibet. Soon, the British introduced their own troops into Lhasa. By the end of 1912, Tibet was completely under the sway of the British.

In Xinjiang, the initial response to the revolutionary events in Central and South China took the form of an anti-Qing action in Urumchi by members of the Unity League and local cells of the Gelaohui secret society. But the action had the complexion of a secret conspiracy, and was quickly put down by Yuan Dahua, the viceroy of Xinjiang. In Yili, events took a different course. On 7 January 1912, revolutionary units of the local New Army garrison headed by a member of the Unity League, Feng Temin, revolted and drove out the Manchu authorities. But owing to the conciliatory mood of the insurgent leaders, the key posts in the provisional republican government fell into the hands of ambitious careerists. Mongol Guang Fu, commander of local Manchu troops, was elected military governor, and a New Army brigade commander, Yang Zuanxu, was made commander of the republican troops.¹⁰⁹ Learning

of the uprising in Yili, Yuan Dahua sent troops there from Urumchi. The Yili provisional government instantly began to recruit an army. Within a fortnight, it enlisted several thousand volunteers, chiefly from among Uighur, Mongol, Kazakh, Dungan, and Kirghiz poor. On 22 January 1912, a Yili force of 2,000 straddled the Falkin gorge. A civil war began, lasting until the summer of 1912. In June, the troops in Urumchi revolted, and drove out Yuan Dahua. A prominent official, Yang Zuanxu, was elected military governor of Xinjiang.¹¹⁰ Relying on Yuan Shikai's support, he visited brutal reprisals on revolutionaries, many of whom, including Feng Tiemin, he simply liquidated. By 1913, his military dictatorship in Xinjiang was firmly installed.

* * *

The revolution of 1911-1913 was the biggest event in China's modern history. Unlike previous spontaneous popular actions it was the first deliberate and conscious democratic movement of the people of China. The revolution deposed the nearly 268-year-old Manchu reign and the monarchic system that had ruled China for more than two millennia. Proclamation of a republic and of the bourgeois democratic provisional constitution of 1912 in that semi-colony, was of great progressive relevance for the future of China. The spread of republican ideas attracted large masses of the people to the revolutionary struggle and furthered its subsequent development. It made things more difficult for the reactionary forces, and ignited the fuse of another revolutionary detonation.

Taking the measure of the significance of the Republic of China, Lenin wrote: 'No matter what the fate of the great Chinese republic, against which various 'civilised' hyenas are now whetting their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.'¹¹¹

The motive force behind the revolution were peasants, workers, urban poor, and the middle and petty urban bourgeoisie. The overthrow of the Qing dynasty was above all the result of the active involvement in the revolution of the mass of the working people. Victory over the monarchy would have been inconceivable without their dedicated participation.

But despite its partial success, the revolution was set back by the feudal reactionaries, compradores, and foreign powers. As before, China was held down by imperialism and feudalism. The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal edge of the revolution was blunted, its aims left undone.

The bourgeoisie (democratic strata of the middle and petty urban bourgeoisie) which conducted the revolution had no consistently anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme. It was apprehensive of any independent popular action, and chose conciliation with counter-revolutionary feudalist and liberal forces. That was the undoing of its attempt to take power and erect a bourgeois republican state in China. The revolution showed that the Chinese bourgeoisie was not grown to the job of really directing the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, and leading the nation to victory. The proletariat had not yet shaped into a class and into an independent political force, and was therefore unable to take the lead in the revolutionary movement.

The revolution of 1911-1913 was a bourgeois revolution. There was no agrarian overturn, which was for China the essential element of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The bourgeois revolutionaries were still far removed from the aim of tearing down landlord property in land, that pillar of feudalism, by radical methods. The toiling masses meanwhile, who had played the leading part in overthrowing the Manchu dynasty, failed to come forward with a programme of their own.

Objectively, the revolution was anti-imperialist, because it destroyed the Qing dynasty, a dependent and tool of foreign powers. Though the bourgeois democrats did not take any open stand against imperialism, they hoped that by ousting the Manchu monarchy they would secure the independence of China or, at least, set the stage for further struggle. But these hopes were not fated to come true. The moment the imperialist powers saw that the Qing court was no longer viable, they shifted their support to Yuan Shikai, whom they used to crush the revolution.

The revolution of 1911-1913 was the most vivid manifestation of the great historical process that Lenin aptly described as the 'awakening of Asia', and was relevant far outside China. A special resolution of the Prague Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party noted 'the world-wide importance of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people, which is bringing emancipation to Asia and is undermining the rule of the European bourgeoisie'.¹¹² The resolution pledged the Russian revolutionary proletariat's solidarity with the Chinese people and their just struggle of liberation.

Chapter 17

THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA UNDER YUAN SHIKAI 1913-1919

While disbanding the Guomindang's armed forces and paralysing its political influence in the provinces, Yuan Shikai sought to keep Guomindang deputies, who had a physical majority in parliament, in Beijing. He endeavoured to win their votes by bribery and deceit, so as to secure legal election to formal presidency. This would make him the factual, uncrowned autocrat of China.

The Guomindang deputies, on the other hand, hoping to restrict Yuan's power by 'lawful means', were out to reach an accord with the Progressive Party. The latter, however, was openly hostile to the Guomindang and, in effect, supported Yuan Shikai's clique. Bitterly opposed to Sun Yatsen and his attempts to renew the military campaign against Yuan, Progressive Party leaders maintained that Yuan's Beiyang militarists could be forced into line by purely parliamentary devices: all that had to be done was to work out and adopt a good constitution. Yuan Shikai could not have hoped for stouter support, and did not hesitate to ask the Progressive Party leaders to form a cabinet.

Yuan Shikai's Military Dictatorship Consolidates Its Grip on Power

On 11 September 1913, a cabinet was formed of 'leading lights', as the leaders of the Progressive Party called themselves at the time: Xiong Xiling was made premier and minister of finance, Liang Qichao minister of justice, Zhang Jian minister of commerce and agriculture, and Wang Daxie minister of education. The key ministries, however, were retained by Yuan Shikai's men. The ministry of war fell to Duan Qirui, the ministry of the navy to Liu Guanyong, the ministry of domestic affairs to Zhu Qiling, the ministry of foreign affairs to Sun Baoqi, and so on.

Despite the servility of the Progressive Party ministers, Yuan Shikai wanted to make assurance doubly sure, and set out to form his own parliamentary party. He instructed his personal secretary, Liang Shiyi, who was concurrently manager of the Bank of Communications (Jiaotong), to buy the loyalty of as many deputies as he could, and to piece together a faithful parliamentary party. He called it the Citizens' Party (Gongmindang). Contrary to the intentions of the Progressive Party, which proposed to adopt a formal constitution first and then elect the formal president, members of the Citizens' Party sought to reverse the procedure, with immediate election of the formal president to be followed by codification of the constitution. The republic could not exist lawfully, they argued, until it was recognised by foreign powers, while formal recognition could not be secured until there was a formal president. After some delay over the adoption of presidential election articles, the government bowed to the demands of the Citizens' Party. Guomindang deputies were in no position to object.

On 4 October 1913, the election articles were finally published, and the day of the president's election in both chambers (House of Representatives and Senate) set for 6 October. On that day, by Yuan Shikai's orders, over a thousand policemen, gendarmes and agents disguised as civilians surrounded the parliament building and, calling themselves a 'citizens' picket' (*gongmintuan*), announced that 'until the right president was elected, no deputy would be allowed to step out of the door of the parliament building'. Who they had in mind for president was more than clear—Yuan Shikai. Confined to the conference hall from eight in the morning to ten at night without food or water, the deputies battled for their candidates to the presidency. Those opposed to Yuan Shikai nominated Li Yuanhong. In the first and second ballots Yuan failed to get the required three-fourths majority. On the third ballot 507 out of 759 votes were cast for Yuan, making him president, and 179 for Li Yuanhong. The following day, Li was elected vice-president with 601 votes out of 719. Yuan Shikai thus became the formal president of the Republic of China.

On the double tenth (10th day of the 10th month, October), the second anniversary of the Xinhai revolution, Yuan was officially inaugurated as president with great pomp and ceremony, receiving a large military parade in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Making a show of gratitude, the president generously distributed orders and rewards to 'outstanding statesmen'. The highest order of the first degree was granted to Yuan's old friend and former imperial dignitary Xu Shichang, who had out of the fullness of his monarchic loyalty refused to cut off his queue after the abdication of the Manchu boy-emperor Pu Yi, and had sought asylum in the German conces-

sion of Qingdao to wait for 'better days'. The same order of the first degree was awarded to Zhao Bingjun, who was Yuan Shikai's hatchet man and assassin of Guomindang leader Song Jiaoren. By lavishing honours upon the more reactionary politicians of the time, the new president served clear notice of what policy he proposed to follow.

Upon entering on his duties, president Yuan addressed a special message to 'His Highness the Emperor of the great Qing dynasty', extolling his good deeds and his royal generosity in granting the people of China a republic. Yuan assured Pu Yi in his message that he would be a president worthy of his people. He promised to revere the emperor's person as before, and to abide by the terms of the abdication, maintaining all the privileges of the Qing court.

In a special statement to the foreign powers, Yuan declared that he would abide by all treaties and agreements concluded by the previous government, and by the privileges and interests of foreigners in China. He asked the powers to continue putting capital into China and helping it 'assimilate civilisation and enlightenment'. The United States had recognised Yuan's republic as far back as May 1913, having thereby given heart to the Chinese reactionaries, and set an example for other powers to follow. Official recognition of the republic and president Yuan Shikai was thereafter granted by Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, and other countries.

Everything Yuan Shikai did was directed against the interests of the nation. He was out to eradicate the elementary democratic rights and liberties secured by the people through the revolution. He referred to Confucianism as the basis of his policies. In a Statement to the People on the Occasion of My Inauguration as President, Yuan Shikai declared that the main pillar of the republic was Confucian ethics as expressed in the concepts of *zhong* (devotion), *xin* (loyalty), *du* (constancy, honesty), and *jing* (reverence, piety). As for legality, the Statement described it as merely a 'means' of achieving the desired end. Yuan Shikai also demanded that the nation should be guided by the listed ethical principles towards him as the first citizen of the republic.

He warned that anyone who encroached on these principles and on the sacred rights of the president would be strictly punished. And he added that none but the laws the president established himself would have legal force. The functions of the parliament he reduced to electing the president, and averred that thereafter it would be needed no longer.

On 10 October 1913, Yuan officially instructed the House of Representatives to amend the provisional constitution of 1912 which, he said, restricted the rights and powers of the president to

excess and was detrimental to the vital interests and the property of the 400 million people of China. He demanded that all power be concentrated in the president, and that the president should be granted the right of finalising and approving the constitution as well as the work of the constitutional committee.

Yuan Shikai attacked the draft constitution that was being discussed by the constitutional committee, because it concentrated executive power in the cabinet of ministers. He decided to prevent the adoption of the draft, and on 24 October appointed eight new members to the committee to control its work. His ploy was rejected (for the eight were not admitted to the conference hall). Yuan retaliated by sending a circular telegram to provincial military and civilian governors and other high-ranking officials, complaining that Guomindang deputies were interfering in the affairs of the executive and were plotting to establish a parliamentary dictatorship. The circular elicited an instant response. Yuan's protégés called for the dissolution of the parliament and of the constitutional committee, the drafting committee, and the Guomindang, and for the cancellation of the parliamentary seats of Guomindang members.

On 4 November, 'acting on the wishes of the provincial authorities', Yuan Shikai ordered the dissolution of the Guomindang. Thereupon, the 438 Guomindang deputies were forcibly stripped of their parliamentary certificates and badges. Now parliament lacked the requisite number of members for a quorum and, in effect, ceased to exist. Yuan established a new body in its place, which he called the Central Political Conference. This consisted of high-ranking officials from provinces and ministries, and of persons appointed by the president. At the request of that body, Yuan issued a decree on 10 January 1914 formally dissolving the House of Representatives and Senate. Another edict, issued on 28 January, dissolved all provincial assemblies and local self-government bodies. This spelled the end of the republican institutions brought in by the Xinhai revolution.

Having put the Guomindang, that chief opposition force, out of the way, Yuan Shikai had no more use for the Progressive Party. On 22 February, he accepted the resignation of Xiong Xiling's cabinet of 'leading lights', which had so obsequiously condoned the dictator's lawlessness.

Yuan was eager to invest his arbitrary rule in a cloak of legality. By decision of the Central Political Conference, a legislative body was formed, known as the Constitutional Conference, which consisted of high-ranking dignitaries and bourgeois landlord intellectuals. According to its statutes, its members had to be males of not less than 35 years of age who had held top official posts for not less than five years and had done outstanding service, or had a legal

education of at least three years in a Chinese or foreign higher school, or who were outstanding scholars with works of practical relevance. At the inauguration of this new institution on 18 March, Yuan made a speech abounding in attacks on the first republican provisional constitution proclaimed by Sun Yatsen's Nanjing government in 1912. Describing it as 'a menace to the republic', Yuan required its final revocation and the introduction of a new provisional constitution giving broad powers to the president of the republic. Such a constitution was proclaimed on 1 May 1914.

Under the new constitution, the parliament was replaced by a Legislative Yuan, which was to be convened by the president. In case of need, the president could with the assent of the Council of State (Cangzhengyuan) dissolve the Legislative Yuan. Members of the Council of State were appointed by the president. The president alone could submit legislative bills, and could withhold publication of laws adopted by the Legislative Yuan if he thought them harmful or hard to fulfil, provided he had the consent of the Council of State.

Under the new constitution, members of judicial bodies were appointed and replaced by the president. If need be, courts could try cases in closed session.

The new constitution provided for the abolition of the cabinet of ministers (the government), which had been responsible to the legislature and established a presidential system of governance. The president was accorded next to unlimited powers. He could declare war and make peace, negotiate and conclude treaties and agreements with foreign states, choose the system of administrative governance at the centre and locally, appoint and dismiss officials and ambassadors, control the treasury, declare a state of emergency, issue emergency orders as valid as ordinary laws, and so on. He was accorded the title of generalissimus and made supreme commander of armed forces, and was entitled to establish the system, structure, and numerical strength of the army and navy.

The articles of the constitution that concerned the rights and duties of citizens, contained the words 'in accordance with the law' or 'as provided by law'. The law, however, was established by the president. In other words, the rights and duties of citizens were defined by the will of the president.

On 20 June 1914, Yuan Shikai formed a Council of State out of seventy of his appointees. The chairman was to be Li Yuanhong, a man who had no will of his own, nicknamed Clay Buddha. On 28 December, at the suggestion of the puppet Council of State, the Constitutional Conference revised the articles governing the election of the president, extending the president's term of office to ten years with no limitation of the number of terms. The new law permitted the Council of State, if 'necessary for political reasons', to

extend the president's term of office by-passing the formality of an election. Under the law, none but the president could nominate presidential candidates, meaning that he could extend his own term of office or pass on the presidency to his children, relatives, or friends.

After publication of the new constitution, Yuan Shikai immediately abolished the Council of State (the cabinet) and established an administrative bureau attached to the office of the president. The post of secretary of state was instituted to replace that of prime minister, and Yuan Shikai appointed to it Xu Shichang. The latter took up the work of preparing the restoration of the monarchic order.

Court titles that had existed under the Qing dynasty were restored. Yuan Shikai granted titles left and right, not only to his henchmen in high government positions, but also to persons belonging to the 'opposition', with Progressive Party leaders Xiong Xiling, Zhang Jian, and Wang Daxie being given the title of *qing* 2nd class, and Liang Qichao, Tang Hualong, and others, the title of *qing* 3rd class. Even Song Jiaoren, the Guomindang leader who had been assassinated on Yuan Shikai's orders, was posthumously awarded the title of *qing* 2nd class.

Yuan Shikai reintroduced the old designations of metropolitan and local government offices, former ranks of civil and military officials, and revived the old worship of titles and ranks. New, ostentatious official uniforms were introduced. The archaic system of civil service examinations was revived to assure selection of personnel suiting the ruling clique.

Yuan Shikai and Xu Shichang created a vast bureaucratic apparatus, instituted a large number of fictitious offices and sinecures, and appointed a variety of generously salaried 'advisers'. This enabled them to bribe politicians and defectors from various political parties. Corruption, embezzlement, and abuse of power were the order of the day at all levels of the state machine, compounded with unquestioning and servile obedience to the uncrowned autocrat, Yuan Shikai. Nothing save the name distinguished the president from an emperor. Yuan Shikai imitated the ways of the empire in elaborate detail: even the seal of the president was an imitation of the imperial jade chop. It entrenched the supreme edicts and state treaties as a symbol of the new 'republican' power.

On 23 December 1914, clad in an emperor's garb, Yuan Shikai brought his ministers and dignitaries to the Temple of Heaven, where he conducted sacrificial rites in honour of the celestial lord. Faithful to ancient imperial ritual, Yuan also celebrated the birthday of Confucius. He formed a commission for the study of the history of the Qing dynasty, and appointed Zhao Erxun, former Qing

viceroy of the three North-Eastern provinces, its chairman.

At the height of the campaign for the revival of old customs, political profiteers came into the open, clamouring for the restoration of the monarchic system and insisting that republicanism did not suit the national condition. Some monarchists of the old bureaucracy, showing excess zeal, urged 'the return of the Qing dynasty' in articles and speeches. In the end, this engendered the fury of Yuan Shikai: he outlawed pro-Qing propaganda and threatened severe punishment.

The Peasant Uprising Under Bai Lang

Barely three years had passed since the Xinhai revolution, and no trace was left of its democratic achievements. High taxes and all sorts of exactions led to famine, especially severe owing to floods in Hunan, Jiangxi and Guangdong. The deterioration of life lashed the mass of the people to action. Workers' demonstrations and peasant risings erupted in all corners of the country. The biggest was the insurrection under Bai Lang in Henan and Shenxi provinces, which lasted several years.

Bai Lang (Grey Wolf) came from an affluent peasant family in Baofeng county, Henan province. As a young man, having quarrelled with a local landlord, he was put in irons and kept in gaol for more than a year, and was cruelly tortured. His release was secured for a high ransom, to pay which his family had had to sell its land. For some time, Bao Lang was a tender of buffaloes carting salt, then a smelter of iron.

After the Xinhai revolution, he and his friends formed a rebel force of local peasants, whom they armed with swords and lances. The local authorities persuaded some members of the force to defect by dispensing promises, but when they accepted the terms they were put to the wall and shot.

Bai Lang withstood all vicissitudes, turning a deaf ear to official blandishments and standing his ground against provocations. Soon he had a force of more than six hundred, with his base and headquarters at Muzhuxia, Wuyang county. His force launched a guerrilla war against local warlords, and against landlords, money-lenders, and greed-ridden prosperous peasants. Bai Lang's followers were chiefly dislocated and impoverished Henan peasants, of whom large numbers roamed up and down the province in search of a livelihood. They belonged to those peasant families which made up the 10 to 20 per cent that abandoned native villages each year to escape starvation. Indeed, when natural calamities swept the countryside, villages were deserted *en masse*. In 1913, most of the refugees

in Henan joined Bai Lang's rebels.

His force was also joined by miners from the local collieries. Coal was worked by primitive methods, and mine owners usually recruited labour from among destitute peasants. The miners were of two categories. One was called *sibozi*, meaning 'dead toilers', that is, men who had sold themselves for life and whose labour earned them nothing but their meals. The *sibozi* were bereft of personal freedom, and their owners could sell them as property. The other category, the *huobozi*, or 'living toilers', were nominally free but in fact wholly dependent. In the mine they came under their elders, and outside the mine under the contractor, without whose permission they were not allowed to leave the miners' camp. Working conditions were next to unbearable, work quotas excessive, and wages miserly. In the absence of elementary safety techniques, large numbers of miners lost their lives in cave-ins and gas explosions, in subterranean floodings, and so on.

There were also navvies (*tangjiang*) in Bai Lang's force, builders of dams, dykes, canals, and irrigation systems in mountain areas. These seasonal jobs were done largely by local peasants. The navvies belonged to various brotherhoods and native associations, were close to each other, knew the terrain splendidly, and were the insurgents' best guides. Bai Lang also had soldiers in his camp who had defected from local warlord armies.

'Smite the rich, help the poor!' was the cry of the rebels. They confiscated the property of landlords, merchants, pawn-brokers, money-changers, and so on, and distributed the expropriated money, valuables, food, and clothing among the poor.

In the early stages of the uprising, the rebel army was well disciplined. For the least offence damaging to peasants, the culprits were strictly punished. The people therefore rendered the insurgents every possible comfort and help.

At first, Bai Lang's force was active exclusively in the Lushan and Baofeng districts, with its base in the Songshan mountains. In 1912, it captured the county town of Yuxian, where it seized 300 rifles and much ammunition from the enemy, and was joined by a group of soldiers who had defected from the provincial army. The strength of the force rose to 1,500 men. Now it could extend its guerrilla actions from Henan to Hubei and Anhui. On seizing Suizhou and Zaoyang, Bai Lang set up a second base in the Tongboshan mountains, whereupon his original force returned to its native Henan.

During the 'second revolution' Bai Lang's rebels sided with the southern republican troops and operated against Yuan Shikai. They put the Beijing-Hankou railway out of commission for as long as two months, and captured the bridge across the Huanghe, which prevented Yuan from moving troops south by rail.

Bai Lang also hit the militarists at Kaifeng, Jingziguan, and Xichuan. After some bitter fighting, Bai Lang took possession of Baiquanshan, Zaoyang, and other important towns.

After finally quelling the 'second revolution', Yuan Shikai sent 30,000 men under Wang Tianzong to put an end to Bai Lang. Though the insurgents numbered only a few thousand, they captured Xinnan, inflicted a crushing defeat on warlord Wang Zhanyuan (whose dead ran to more than 2,000), and occupied important strategic points along the Beijing-Hankou railway. Soldiers of the warlord armies kept coming to their side, considerably augmenting their numbers: Bai Lang's followers soon counted some 10,000, armed with rifles and machine-guns, and in possession of mountain artillery, all this being booty they won in battle. Thus reinforced, Bai headed for Hubei, and thereupon for Shenxi.

After taking the important mountain pass of Laohekou, Bai called a conference to rename his rebels the People's Army. Bai Lang was its commander-in-chief and Li Hongbin chief of staff. Wang Shengqi was made chief of the vanguard and Bai Xiazi chief of the rearguard. The central part of the army was put under Han Dashi.

On 13 March 1914, the forward details of the People's Army occupied the strategically important town of Jingziguan at the junction of the three provinces of Hubei, Henan, and Shenxi. The Shenxi provincial troops (13 battalions) in the town, went over to the rebels. They set fire to administrative buildings and rich houses. Thereupon, with this significant victory to his credit, Bai Lang proclaimed himself the 'great Han ruler' and said in a proclamation to the people that the aim of his rising was national salvation.

At the end of March 1914, the People's Army crossed the Shenxi border and mounted an offensive in three directions: Lantian, Xiaoyi, and Hanzhong. Awed by the scale of the insurgency, the Yuan Shikai government despatched a large Beiyang army force to suppress it. In addition, eleven divisions of the Shenxi provincial army were moved to the Xian area. Three flights of military aircraft, too, were sent there for reconnaissance purposes. The governor of Sichuan was ordered to send his troops into the field at Nanzhong to cut off Bai Lang's force. Troops from Gansu province were also brought in. All in all, some 200,000 troops (under General Lu Jianzhang) were deployed to put down the rising.

Early in April, the People's Army was still moving in a westerly direction. On 8 April, it crossed the river Wei (a tributary of the Huanghe) and entered the towns of Wugong and Fufeng. From here the rebels turned east, heading for Xian. At the approaches to Xian, in the vicinity of Zhouzhi and Shanyang, a pitched battle occurred. Losses ran to fairly large numbers on both sides. On 13 April, Bai Lang's army of 20,000 captured Binzhou. Here Bai issued

a proclamation declaring himself successor to the cause of the Xinhai revolution, and people's champion against Yuan Shikai. He accused Yuan of usurping power, and of betraying China's national interests. The proclamation had the effect of attracting more recruits. They flocked to his camp in large numbers.

In the latter half of April, the People's Army marched in a southerly direction, and captured the county towns of Linyou, Qishan, and Fengxiang. Later that month, the rebels entered Gansu province. On 4 May, they took Tianshui, where they gained possession of large quantities of arms and ammunition, and then turned south, planning to thrust into Sichuan province.

On 2 June, in a battle at Fuqiang, Bai Lang was wounded, and after some unsuccessful attacks at Zhanxiang and Fuqiang decided to turn back and head for Henan. *En route*, the People's Army captured Baoji in a lightning strike, and on 15 June came to the outskirts of Xian. Yuan Shikai had hastily gathered 20 battalions under General Zhang Xung to hold the city, and summoned considerable reinforcements from Henan province. So, Bai Lang evaded an engagement, and in July marched into Henan. With long marches and countless engagements behind them, having covered thousands of kilometres of hard terrain, the fatigued rebels, now back in their native county, began to disperse. The People's Army ceased to exist as one whole. And Yuan Shikai jumped at the chance of crushing it. In early August, fighting erupted in the counties of Lushan and Baofeng. Bai Lang's intrepid assistants, Li Hongbin and Bai Xiazi, were killed. In mid-August, the remnants of the People's Army were encircled in Lushan county, and Bai Lang and Han Dashi, too, laid down their lives in a clash at Shizhuang.

Bai Lang's peasant war had been a direct continuation of the popular movement set in motion by the Xinhai revolution. Its aim was to do away with landlord exploitation and Yuan Shikai's military dictatorship that represented feudalists and compradores, and to uphold the republican system. Among its other targets were foreign invaders. When assaulting the town of Zaoyang in Hubei province, for example, the rebels set fire to missionary houses and the church, and ransacked the residence of the American missionary society. In Laohekou they sacked and gutted the premises of the British-American petroleum and tobacco companies, and those of the firm of Shenjia, distributors of sewing machines. The property of these companies was confiscated.

Bai Lang's movement kept in touch with the southern republican army until the time the 'second revolution' was defeated and all ties broke off. But though Bai Lang had members of the Guomindang among his men, and the adviser of his staff, a man named Shen, had been sent to him by Sun Yatsen and had won considerable

prestige among the rebels, there had been no operational co-ordination between Bai and the Guomindang. Following the 'second revolution', the insurgents operated in areas surrounded by northern warlord troops, and were cut off from the anti-Yuan forces in Central, South, and South-West China. On the move continuously from place to place, Bai Lang's forces had no opportunity to fortify some stronghold for any length of time, to gather strength, establish a lasting popular regime, carry out democratic reforms, and thereby rally the mass of the people. All the same, Bai's army contributed to the anti-feudal struggle of the peasant masses in localities that it happened to pass through. Besides, it drew off Yuan Shikai's best troops from other points.

At about this time, Yuan Shikai also launched reprisals against the patriotic opposition, especially followers of the Guomindang. The reign of terror that he unleashed in Guangdong and Hunan provinces, and in the cities of Wuchang, Nanjing, and Shanghai, where revolutionary traditions were strongly rooted, was brutal to the extreme. Punitive raids, village 'purges', wholesale arrests, vandalism and plunder, devilish violence, and public executions became commonplace. Yuan's secret police seized people on the slightest suspicion. Denunciation and slander, however vague and groundless, could cost the victim dearly, even his life. The police ruled with an iron hand in all parts of the country. On 2 March 1914, Yuan issued a draconian press law, threatening harsh punishment to anyone who published uncensored reports and comments. On 16 November, corporal punishment was re-introduced for men from 16 years of age to 60.

Yuan Shikai's war against popular movements and democratic forces had the support and sympathy of the imperialist powers. And Yuan was bending over backwards to please the foreign states. Following secret negotiations, he granted Japan the right to build five railway lines in the North-East and in Inner Mongolia. On 9 March, he signed a treaty that permitted the United States to build a naval base in Sanduao (Fujian) and shipyards in Mawei (Fuzhou). In return, he was promised a loan of 10 million dollars for 'naval development'. And it was only thanks to a protest of the Japanese government, which claimed monopoly rights to Fujian province, that the treaty terms were not carried out. Negotiations were resumed in spring with the five-power consortium concerning a second large loan to the tune of 20 million pounds sterling, and that these were never concluded was due to the outbreak of the First World War.

Lenin, who closely followed developments in China, wrote in May 1913 in an article entitled, 'Backward Europe and Advanced Asia', that the European bourgeoisie dreaded the growing democratic movement in Asia and supported 'everything backward, moribund

and medieval' in that part of the world.¹ It was helping reactionaries in Asia to further the selfish aims of financiers and capitalist swindlers. The moment their 'net' profit was in jeopardy, "advanced" Europe will raise a cry about "civilisation", "order", "culture" and "fatherland"! It will set the *guns* in motion and, in alliance with Yüan Shih-kai, that adventurer, traitor and friend of reaction, "crush" a republic in backward Asia'.²

Yuan relied on warlords of the Beiyang clique, who were in control of a large number of provinces, to hold down the progressive forces. The power of the *dujuns*, the warlords, had in fact grown out of all proportion. Endless strife and fighting began between them for a bigger slice of the pudding.

In sum, on the eve of the First World War the revolutionary gains of the people and the democratic, republican institutions that had sprung up in the course of the Xinhai revolution lay in shambles. The military dictatorship of the biggest feudalist and compradore of them all, Yuan Shikai, was firmly in control of China.

Japanese Aggressiveness and Growth of the Patriotic Movement

The First World War, fought for an imperialist redivision of the world, naturally had repercussions in the Far East. Japanese and American imperialists saw an opportunity to further their predatory plans in China.

On 6 August 1914, the Chinese government announced neutrality. It appealed to the belligerent powers not to spread the hostilities to China and its territorial waters, and especially to the foreign-leased territories. It also appealed to the non-belligerent United States and Japan to back up its neutrality, but neither country replied to its plea. In fact, the Japanese government, which was priming for aggression in China, protested against China's appealing to the United States.

Conscious of its weakness in the Far East, imperialist Germany had no stake in extending the hostilities to that part of the world. Germany's chargé d'affaires in China, Maltzahn, demanded in a note to the Chinese foreign ministry that no armed forces of any belligerent state should be allowed across Chinese territory. A man of great energy, he succeeded in forming a Sino-German Society in Beijing to invigorate ties with the Chinese public and to influence public opinion.

Diplomats of the Entente countries, too, exerted pressure on the Chinese government. They protested against the use of Chinese labour to build fortifications in German-dominated Qingdao, and

objected to China's continuing to pay Germany's share of the Boxer indemnity. (Germany used these funds for anti-Entente propaganda in China.)

Like France, Russia, and the United States, Britain and its dominions, Australia and New Zealand, had nothing to gain and much to lose if Japan declared war on Germany in Chinese territory, for this would increase Japanese influence in the Far East and the Pacific. The Japanese imperialists, on the other hand, were eager to join the war at once, seeing the golden opportunity this offered for seizing German possessions in China, notably in Shandong, and the Far East. They opposed any agreement between the belligerents to rule out the Far East as a possible theatre of hostilities.

Following lively diplomatic intercourse between British foreign secretary Grey and Japanese foreign minister Kato, Japan defied the British request to take no action against the German navy in China waters and 'preserve peace in the Far East', and on 15 August 1914 tendered Germany an ultimatum that ran out at noon on 23 August. The ultimatum required Germany immediately to withdraw its battleships and other naval vessels from Japanese and Chinese waters, and to disarm those that could not be withdrawn. Furthermore, not later than 15 September, Germany was to hand over to Japan unconditionally the leased territory of Jiaozhou, which would thereupon be returned to China.

Resorting to delaying actions, Germany offered China direct negotiations concerning the return of the city and port of Qingdao. On 16 August, the Japanese chargé d'affaires protested, saying that Japan would consider any Chinese agreement with Germany a violation of neutrality, for which China would bear full responsibility. Under the bludgeoning pressure of Japan, which was backed by Britain and Russia, Yuan Shikai had no stomach for Germany's offer, and broke off the negotiations.

Failing to receive an answer to their ultimatum, the Japanese opened hostilities on 22 August, aiming to capture Jiaozhou and the port of Qingdao. On 23 August, Japan officially declared war on Germany. That day, Maltzahn offered Yuan Shikai to at once unconditionally retake possession of the leased territory. Yuan hesitated to accept the offer. Instead, he called on the United States to take over Jiaozhou, and later return it to China. But Yuan's scheme of capitalising on the Japanese-American contradictions did not materialise. The United States government was reluctant to intervene. It merely warned Japan that if the latter intended to extend its military operations beyond Jiaozhou it would have to negotiate the matter with the United States.

Despite the contradictions between them, the Western powers in effect condoned the Japanese acts of aggression in China. As a neut-

ral, China demanded that Japan and Germany restrict the hostilities to the leased territory. The Japanese command ignored its request. It mounted military operations on a far larger scale. Rather than attack Qingdao from the sea, where the Germans were prepared to resist an onslaught, the Japanese troops struck from across the fortified zone of Jiaozhou.

On 2 September, a Japanese force of 30,000 landed at Longkou in Shandong, 150 miles north of Qingdao. The following day, the Chinese government informed foreign diplomats in Beijing that as a neutral it could not bear responsibility for actions of belligerent states. But the foreign diplomats took no notice. Twelve days later, Japanese troops engaged the Germans. And in another eleven days the British, too, landed a party of 1,500 men. On 31 October, the joint Anglo-Japanese force mounted a general offensive. The hostilities, which lasted more than two months, ended on 7 November with the surrender of Qingdao and its 3,500-man German garrison. German admiral von Spee's fleet of two heavy cruisers (the *Scharnhorst* and *Geisenau*), three light cruisers, and several merchant vessels fitted out as supply ships, had steamed out of Jiaozhou after the outbreak of hostilities for the Caroline islands. (When the Japanese encircled Qingdao on 27 August, the main German naval force had escaped the trap and was already far away.) A few days later, the rest of the German leased territory was in Japanese hands. Not content, the Japanese set out to capture the entire Shandong railway. On 27 and 30 September, the Chinese government protested, saying that seizure of the railway lacked legal grounds, that the railway was a joint Sino-German private enterprise and no military need existed for capturing it. The Japanese government replied that since the railway was directly related to the leased territory of Jiaozhou, it was German property. On 25 September, Japanese troops took the railway station of Weixian, on 5 October Qingzhou, and Jinan, the capital of Shandong, on the following day. In short, Japan became master of the rich province of Shandong with its population of 30 million.

On 19 November, the Japanese authorities established a military regime in the Chinese territory they had occupied. The promise of returning Jiaozhou to China was forgotten. Violence and arbitrary rule were loosened on the people. Capturing Longkou, the Japanese command introduced forced labour. Insubordination was punished by wartime law. Japanese soldiers occupied houses, took food from local people, plundered property, and destroyed crops. On capturing Pingdu, the Japanese command demanded that within five days the local authorities turn in 1,000 head of cattle, 1,000 swine, 2,000 chickens, 50 million *qing* of rice and fodder, 1,500 carts, and so on. Officials who did not fulfil the order would be court-martialled.

The county chief, who tried to flee, was caught and held hostage. If a villager 'violated' Japanese military laws, the entire population of his village was subject to execution. Throughout Jiaozhou, the Japanese conducted searches, confiscated goods, and plundered property. This precipitated protests and traders' strikes. Seizing mines and quarries all along the Jiaozhou-Jinan railway, the Japanese expelled the Chinese administration.

Yuan Shikai's government, busy putting down Bai Lang's movement and eliminating the remnants of democratic republican institutions, rendered no resistance. Yuan fawned servilely upon the Japanese aggressors, hoping to win their backing. Nor did he deny concessions to other powers. Britain was permitted to collect scrap iron for its war needs, while the French were permitted to recruit Chinese labourers for shipment to France.

The war in Europe, and Yuan's defeatist policy, gave the Japanese a free hand in China. They only sought for a suitable excuse to set new demands and secure their plan of putting China under their economic and political sway. And that excuse appeared when the Chinese government asked Japan and Britain in a note of 7 February 1915 to abolish the war zone in Shandong since the fighting there was over. China suggested that Japan withdraw its troops to within the limits of Jiaozhou. In a reply on 10 January, Japan rejected the Chinese request. Japanese military authorities lost no time to establish civil administrations all over Shandong, build a network of military telephone lines, and replace Chinese customs officers in Qingdao with Japanese. Furthermore, on 18 January Japanese minister Hiyoki handed China the Twenty-One Demands. In violation of diplomatic procedure, the note containing the demands was handed not to the foreign ministry, but directly to president Yuan Shikai. Hiyoki made clear, too, that in the event of a satisfactory reply the Japanese government would support the president in 'raising his post by one more degree'. This was a hint that Japan would go along with Yuan's plan of a monarchic coup d'état. The dictator was advised to keep the Twenty-One Demands secret until the proper time.

Japan's Twenty-One Demands were presented in five groups. The first group of demands required China to recognise the transfer to Japan of all German possessions and privileges in Shandong, to guarantee non-alienation of any part of the peninsula to a third power, to grant Japan the right of building a railway through Chifu to Longkou and join it with the Qingdao-Jinan line, and to open large cities to Japanese trade. The second group required more privileges for Japan in the north-eastern part of China and the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, and lease of Port Arthur, Dairen, and of the South Manchurian and Andong-Mukden railways for 99 years, and the transfer under Japanese management for the same term of the

Jilin-Changchun railway. Japan also demanded exclusive rights to purchasing and leasing land, and permission for Japanese subjects to engage in trade and industrial activity and in working mines, and to reside in all districts and towns of the provinces concerned.

The third group of Japanese demands required joint working by Japanese and Chinese capital of the Hanyeping iron works in Central China, and the railways and collieries in the area. This meant surrendering to Japan one of the chief bases for China's industrial development.

Among the fourth group of demands was one requiring China to renounce alienation or lease to a third power of harbours, bays, and islands along the China coast.

The fifth and last group, which contained the most aggressive demands, would bring about China's political, military, and financial enslavement. Japan required China to invite Japanese political, military, and financial advisers to the government and army, joint administration of the police and of military industry, purchase by China of at least 50 per cent of its armaments from Japan, rights for Japan to build a number of railways in Central China and the Yangtze valley, rights to buy land in the country's interior for Japanese hospitals, temples, and schools, priority rights to developing industry, mining, and to constructing railways and ports in Fujian province, and the right of conducting religious propaganda in China. This would turn China into something akin to a Japanese colony.

On acquainting himself with the contents of the note, Yuan Shikai asked the Japanese minister to negotiate with representatives of the foreign ministry. On 27 January 1915, Lu Zhengxiang was urgently appointed foreign minister, and Cao Rulin, a man of definitely pro-Japanese leanings, deputy minister. At their first meeting, Hiyoki refused to discuss the demands one by one. He insisted that the Chinese government say whether or not it was prepared to comply with the demands as a totality. The Japanese minister warned that some of Japan's rulers favoured immediate occupation of all Manchuria and the partitioning of China; the Japanese government, he said, was more 'moderately' inclined and guided by good intentions, and confined itself to but the Twenty-One Demands.

On 8 March, Hiyoki again pressed Cao Rulin for an affirmative reply. Japan added muscle to its brazen move by shipping in an army of 30,000 to Manchuria, Shandong, and the vicinity of Tianjin and Dagu.

Japan was eager to keep its demands secret from the people of China, and from its allies. But already a few days after Hiyoki's visit, the Twenty-One Demands became a lively topic of discussion in the Chinese press. On 14 February, the Japanese government was compelled to officially inform the foreign powers of its demands

through its minister in Beijing. In so doing, it announced only the first 11 items of the first four groups of demands. The fifth group the Japanese tried to conceal. After it was published in the Chinese press, however, they stated that the demands of the fifth group were made only in the nature of a 'wish'.

Preoccupied with the war in Europe, the powers were not able to take effective action against Japan's aggression in China. Britain, an ally of the Japanese, was not averse to Japan's expansion in China, counting on Japanese support of British policy in the Far East. The British government consented to the Japanese claims in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia (an understanding to that effect was reached by Grey and Kato in January 1913), and hoped the Japanese would in return lay no claims to British 'spheres of influence' in Central China. For these reasons, the British government confined itself to censuring the Japanese moves in the press, and suggested that Japan renounce some of the demands of the fifth group.

Tsarist Russia, fearing further Japanese expansion in Manchuria and Mongolia, refrained from aggravating relations with Japan. Besides, it was intending to purchase Japanese arms, ammunition, and equipment for its war against Germany.

The U.S. government acknowledged the existence of Japan's 'special relations' with the 'adjoining' Chinese territory of Shandong, South Manchuria, and Inner Mongolia. The memorandum of Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, of 13 March 1915, merely declared the U.S. government's 'objections' to demands relating to the province of Fujian, which had for a long time attracted the special interest of the U.S. imperialists.

As for the Germans, they were seeking a separate peace with Japan ever since their defeat in the Far East in a bid to win it to their side. In 1915, German diplomats were highly active to that effect, and were naturally disinclined to take any measures against Japanese expansion in China. And Japanese diplomats in China went out of their way to be seen in public with German representatives and journalists, so as to kindle apprehensions of a separate Japanese peace with Germany, and thereby exercise pressure on Japan's allies.

Hard pressed by patriotic Chinese, and with some hope of support from the Entente and the United States, Yuan Shikai did not have the heart to bow to the Twenty-One Demands, and began bargaining. The talks with the Japanese imperialists dragged out until 17 April. On 26 April, Japan renounced the demand of building a railway in the Yangzi valley. On 1 May, Yuan made a series of concessions, chiefly concerning Inner Mongolia. But he demanded that the Japanese state the date and terms for the return of Jiaozhou to China, and for the withdrawal from there of Japanese troops. Taking the demand as an 'insult', the Japanese came up with an ultimatum on

7 May. It ran out at 6 p.m. on 9 May. Owing to grave internal differences, the Japanese government had this time left out the fifth group of demands, retaining only the item concerning Fujian province.

Yuan Shikai's gamble on Western support fell through. More, the Western powers exerted crude pressure on the Chinese government. In the morning of 8 May, British minister Jordan advised Lu Zhengxiang to comply with all Japanese demands. On the same day, U.S. minister Paul S. Reinsch also recommended that 'to avoid a conflict with Japan' the Chinese government should bow to the Japanese demands. On 9 May, Yuan announced that he would comply with the Japanese ultimatum. That day went down in the history of China as a day of national disgrace. On 13 May, even before the official signing of protocols validating the Twenty-One Demands, Yuan Shikai issued an edict forbidding lease or alienation of harbours, bays, and islands along the China coast to foreign powers. On 25 May, an onerous treaty which, in effect, honoured the Twenty-One Demands, and a set of additional protocols, were signed with Japan. Yuan Shikai, who had committed this act of national treason, posed as something next to a hero who had wrested important concessions from Japan (cancellation of the fifth group of demands). In his statement to provincial civil and military officials, he wrote: 'Having secured concessions from Japan, our country permitted no encroachments on national sovereignty, and for that reason I instructed the ministry of foreign affairs to agree to an affirmative reply. In that way, the incident may be considered settled, and the friendship between China and the foreign powers restored.' At the same time, Yuan Shikai had his menials in the capital and the provinces organise messages from various institutions, 'public groups', officials, and widely known scholars, extolling the 'national leader' for his 'brilliant diplomatic victory'. The columns of the bribed press were filled with adulation. The press portrayed the disgraceful surrender to the Japanese as 'an act of mutual concessions, ensuring peace and well-being in East Asia'. Night-time processions with lanterns were held to celebrate the 'victory holiday'. But none of this could disguise the betrayal committed by Yuan Shikai.

When word of Japan's Twenty-One Demands reached the public, anger gripped all sections of Chinese society. Public organisations in cities and provinces called on the government to rebuff the aggressor. In Shanghai, Hankou, Fuzhou, Amoy, Chifu, and other large cities people boycotted Japanese goods. Public collections of funds for national defence were held in Shanghai. Soon, the movement for a national salvation fund had spread across the entire country. Workers, students, shop attendants, servants, rickshaws, and

urban poor donated what meagre sums they could. Collections were also held among Chinese abroad, especially in Japan and the United States. Large sums were collected in Tokyo, San Francisco, New York, and other cities. In Hankou, an angry crowd attacked and ransacked Japanese shops. In Chifu, shopkeepers refused to serve Japanese customers. Stickers were pasted all over Amoy, calling on the people to stop all dealings with the Japanese. On 20 March, a boycott of banknotes issued by the Japanese-owned bank in Taiwan began in Fuzhou. People refused to lease premises and homes to Japanese.

The patriotic movement came as a shock for Yuan Shikai. He outlawed boycott of Japanese goods, and warned that any damage to Japanese would be severely punished. When the Japanese tendered their ultimatum of 7 May, high officials and dignitaries, and rich merchants, fled from Beijing with their families and fortunes to foreign settlements in Tianjin and other cities, fearing an outburst of popular fury. And news of the Yuan Shikai government's surrender to the Japanese ultimatum did cause a wave of anger to roll across China. Japanese goods were boycotted in all towns and provinces. So were Japanese merchants and banks. Meetings of protest were held in all corners of the country, proclamations issued, and anti-Japanese posters, cartoons, slogans, and stickers pasted on all walls. Japanese merchandise was expropriated and burned. The 'national salvation' fund collections grew in scale. Public organisations demanded that foreign minister Lu Zhengxiang and deputy minister Cao Rulin should be punished for betraying the nation. The two worthies were forced to resign in haste. A major incident occurred in Hankou. Japanese residents there intended to hold a procession with torches and lanterns on 13 May to celebrate the 'great victory'. In protest, Chinese shopkeepers and their employees went on strike, shuttered up the shops, and turned off the city lighting. Japanese seamen were despatched to restore order. Bloodshed was only avoided thanks to the intervention of the Chinese police, which prevented an anti-Japanese demonstration. All the same, Japanese minister Hiyoki protested to the Chinese government against the 'Hankou uprising', and Yuan Shikai tendered the Japanese an official apology.

Clashes between the patriotic populace and the authorities occurred in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Changsha, and other cities. The Japanese minister repeatedly asked Yuan's government to punish local officials for being 'too lenient'. On 16 June, Yuan Shikai issued a new decree outlawing anti-Japanese boycotts, and dismissed the governor of Hunan Liu Xinyuan for disobeying the previous decree. The abject servility of the government, and the reprisals it showered on the patriotic movement, generated a new wave of mass protests.

Overseas Chinese and Chinese students abroad showed their patriotism as well. Students in the United States called a meeting, at which they heatedly discussed methods of combating the Japanese aggression and called for war. A large number volunteered to anti-Japanese fighting units, and boarded ships to return home. One of the few students to remain aloof was Hu Shi, future leader of liberal compradore elements. More, in an open letter to the other students, he ridiculed their patriotic 'frenzy', described it as 'senseless' and 'useless', and as 'a confusing waste of the valuable time they would do better to devote to their studies'. The day after the humiliating Twenty-One Demands were signed, Hu Shi extolled 'the diplomatic skill' of Yuan Shikai, who had 'flexibly combined firmness with compromise as no one has ever succeeded before him in the history of diplomacy'.³ The open letter and the later pronouncements of Hu Shi drew criticism from Chinese students in the United States and other countries.

Chinese students and revolutionary emigrants in Japan took up the cudgels against the Japanese aggression. Some returned students organised 'petition groups', and demanded that the government put up a firm front, not short of declaring war. Appealing to the masses in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and other large cities, they organised public debates, calling on intellectuals, students, and people from other walks of life to discuss methods of saving the country, and propagated the idea of a people's forum to deal with questions of national salvation.

Among the most active leaders of the patriotic movement in Japan was young Li Dazhao, a future founder of the Communist Party of China, who was then enrolled at Waseda University in Tokyo. He initiated the Scientific Society of the Holy Continent (i.e. China) (Shenzhou xuehui), which brought together patriotic students and conducted far-flung propaganda. A collection of articles was put out on Li Dazhao's initiative, entitled, *Memorandum of National Disgrace*. In an address to countrymen on behalf of the Union of Chinese Students in Japan, and in an article 'Nation, Be Vigilant' (June 1915), Li produced a thorough analysis of China's international and internal situation under Yuan Shikai's military dictatorship against the background of the First World War. He showed the aggressive nature of the Twenty-One Demands, and warned of the far-reaching plans of conquest and bondage that Japan nourished for China. If these plans succeeded, he pointed out, 'China would lose the last vestiges of its sovereignty, and all hope of national regeneration and power'. Japan's example, he feared, would surely be followed by the Western powers. He warned that 'a realistic danger of partition has arisen for China'.⁴ Li Dazhao called on the Chinese to take heart, and to fight for the honour of their country. He demanded

that the Chinese government abandon the idea of restoring the monarchy, reverse its anti-people policy, revive democratic institutions, promote public education, and introduce military conscription. He pleaded with the government to make common cause with the people in order to save the country and rise from disgrace. Li stressed that the life and death of the nation depended entirely on the nation itself, that nothing could put China on its knees if all Chinese rendered firm resistance to the conquerors. From the outset, Li Dazhao's writings were deeply patriotic, imbued with a spirit of democracy and revolutionary optimism. Even in those early days, his political views strongly influenced the thinking of progressive young people in China and abroad.

The mood of the Chinese students in Japan alarmed Yuan Shikai. He instructed the Chinese minister in Tokyo, Lu Zongyu, to outlaw and dissolve their Union and to withhold scholarship grants if any students disobeyed and to send them home.

Sun Yatsen and his closest associates, Zhu Zhixin, Liao Zhongkai, and others, were in Japan at the time. After the failure of the 'second revolution', Sun had (in July 1914) reorganised the Guomindang, naming it the Chinese Revolutionary Party (Zhonghua gemingdang). The new organisation had a more rigid constitution, and purged its ranks of reactionary politicians, turncoats, and quasi-revolutionaries who had joined the Guomindang in its days of promise. Sun Yatsen was elected president of the new party, and Huang Xing was offered the post of vice-president. But he did not approve of Sun Yatsen's course, turned the offer down, and soon left for the United States.

Sun Yatsen denounced Yuan Shikai's policy of national betrayal, and notably the acceptance of the Twenty-One Demands. He held that the people of China would not win national independence and freedom until they came to grips with Yuan Shikai and his dictatorship. The Chinese Revolutionary Party's goal, as defined by Sun, was to fight against the dictatorship of Yuan Shikai's warlord clique for the renewal of democratic institutions and for the 1912 Constitution. This platform was set forth at length in Sun Yatsen's Call for a March Against Yuan Shikai, published in 1915.

The rightists among the former Guomindang leaders who joined the Chinese Revolutionary Party, Huang Xing and his close associates Chen Jiongming and Li Liejun, though opposed to Yuan Shikai, urged collaboration with him against the Japanese aggression so as not to push him into the Japanese camp. They wanted all anti-Yuan activity stopped, and the nation to concentrate its efforts against the external enemies. On arriving in the United States, Huang Xing wanted to speak to President Wilson, whom he hoped to persuade to act against the Japanese aggression in China. But Wilson declined to receive him.

Sun Yatsen asked Huang Xing again and again to come to Tokyo and help in the campaign. But Huang refused to work with Sun Yatsen. The division among the former leaders of the Guomindang was to Yuan Shikai's advantage. His agents spread vile slander about Sun Yatsen and his followers, accusing him of pro-Japanese activity. Yuan, meanwhile, postured as a sincere Chinese patriot, shedding crocodile tears and calling on all Chinese never to forget the 9th of May. Revolutionary republicans and all patriotic citizens he called 'traitors'. On 16 June 1915, the Political Council, obedient to his will, passed a law on the punishment of traitors, whereby Yuan had decided to get rid of his political opponents once and for all.

Yuan Shikai's Monarchist Coup and the Outbreak of Civil War

Claiming a national crisis, Yuan Shikai set out to establish a 'strong one-man government'. He felt that the time had come for his long since conceived plan of a monarchic coup to instal himself as emperor of China. He was certain that the imperialist powers would back him.

The Japanese imperialists were, indeed, essentially in favour of monarchic restoration in China. This was clear from their policy during the Xinhai revolution. Planning to conquer China (a projection of the Twenty-One Demands) while war raged in Europe, the jingoist Black Dragon Society of Japan (Kokuriukai) declared in a memorandum in October 1914 that the republican form of government in China was an insuperable obstacle to Sino-Japanese military alliance, and that for the policy of the Japanese Empire to succeed the present situation must be used to convert the republican government into a constitutional monarchy on Japanese lines.

As we know, the Japanese promised to support Yuan Shikai's monarchic plans if he accepted the Twenty-One Demands. Even before that, in 1914, the Japanese adviser Nagao helped plot the elimination of democratic institutions and restoration of monarchy. But the Japanese imperialists felt that it was untimely to declare Yuan emperor at that time, for the rising anti-monarchic movement could jeopardise implementation of the recently accepted Twenty-One Demands.

The countries of the Entente were reluctant to back Yuan's monarchic coup, for they did not want Japan to strengthen its positions in China.

The United States, however, held a different view. On 13 May 1915, the U.S. government protested against China's treaty with Japan, and demanded that U.S. interests be made secure. To win

over Yuan and his clique, the Americans granted him five large loans to the tune of 50 million dollars between 1914 and 1916. An American, Professor Frank Johnson Goodnow, was installed with the Yuan Shikai government as adviser on administrative law. He helped draw up the new 'constitution' and some other legislative acts designed to dismantle the still surviving republican democratic institutions. Goodnow endeavoured to substantiate this in theory, and produced an article, 'On the New Constitution', which was published in a number of Beijing newspapers in October and November 1914. He argued that the parliamentary system was incompatible with the national spirit of the Chinese who, he contended, had no interest in politics and were under the sway of familial traditions. Young Li Dazhao hurled the full force of his criticism against that article. In August 1915, asked by Yuan Shikai, Goodnow again tried to prove that the Chinese were culturally unprepared for the republican system, and again maintained that monarchy was better suited to the Chinese spirit and traditions—this time in a treatise entitled *On Republic and Monarchy*. The U.S. 'democratic' adviser's book was part of an ideological offensive in preparation for the monarchic coup. But it was also a reflection of the U.S. ruling element's intentions to lean on Yuan Shikai in shoring up U.S. positions in China.

On 28 October 1915, the Japanese chargé d'affaires in Beijing, jointly with the Russian and British ministers, warned Yuan Shikai's government of the dangerous scale of the anti-monarchic movement in China, and recommended postponing proclamation of a monarchy. In his reply, Yuan Shikai made clear that he feared no internal disorders, and complained of the activity against him of members of the Guomindang living in exile in Japan or in Japanese concessions in China.

On 15 December, after the Council of State had resolved to proclaim a constitutional monarchic form of governance, Japan and the countries of the Entente stated that 'the powers have decided to keep China under observation'. The U.S. government refused to associate itself with this *démarche* on the hypocritical pretext of not wishing 'to interfere in China's internal affairs'.

Intricate diplomatic schemes were being played out in connection with the imminent monarchic coup d'état. U.S. minister to China, Reinsch, wrote later that most of the foreign diplomatic representatives in Beijing were ready to officially recognise the new order in China on 1 January 1916. Yuan Shikai and his followers were naturally aware that the imperialist powers were not really averse to a monarchic order in China. So Yuan Shikai mounted a still more vigorous campaign for monarchic restoration.

A week after the appearance of Goodnow's treatise, six former

constitutionalists and Unity League turncoats, the scholars Yang Du, Yan Fu, Sun Yuyun, Hu Ying, Liu Shiwei, and Li Xiehe (promptly nicknamed the Noble Six), acting on Yuan Shikai's orders, founded a monarchist party, Chouanhui (Society for the Study of Administrative Matters), which took the ideological preparations for the restoration of monarchy into its hands. The party's policy guideline was Yang Du's treatise, 'The Country's Salvation Through Constitutional Monarchy'. Referring to the opinion of the 'honourable democratic adviser' Goodnow that the republican system was unsuited for backward and benighted China, the author blamed the republican system of government for China's national crisis, and maintained that to save the country, to make the country strong and prosperous, there had to be a constitutional monarchy and a strong monarch. The Chouanhui suggested that military and civil dignitaries of all provinces should send their representatives to Beijing to discuss the administrative structure and, thereupon, on behalf of the gathering, petition the Council of State to pass a law restoring the monarchy in China.

On 1 September, too impatient to wait for the arrival of these representatives, the Chouanhui hastily slapped together a 'petition' on behalf of public and political figures of various provinces residing in the capital, and that 'petition' was put before an urgently called session of the Council of State.

As chief of the Beiyang warlord clique, Yuan Shikai knew what the various groups of warlords thought of his plan of a monarchic coup. His closest associates, the warlords Xu Shichang, Duan Qirui, and others, who had important government and military posts in the capital and the provinces, were in no way anxious to see him installed as emperor. Each of them could be a candidate to the presidency under the republican system, while in a monarchy the throne would go to Yuan Shikai's heir. This was why Yuan tried to limit the power of these leading warlords, and chose provincial military governors among loyal warlords of lesser scale: Duan Zhigui for Hubei, Ni Sichong for Anhui, Chen Huan for Sichuan, and so on. He counted on the support of the armed forces and of his henchmen in the provinces for the coup to succeed.

To make things look legal, Yuan ordered his faithful henchmen among dignitaries to form an All-China Joint Petition Committee, which, on behalf of the 22 provinces and special regions, demanded the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and named Yuan Shikai as its choice for emperor. To prevent any claims to the throne of the Qing dynasty, Yuan sought written assurances of Qing support, and gave the Manchus a written promise to abide by the terms of the abdication, to preserve the Qing court's privileges in perpetuity, and even to inscribe the terms in the future constitution. Yuan

went farther than this exchange of letters (which were published on 16 December 1915); he offered his daughter in matrimony to Pu Yi, the last of the Qing emperors. Though many members of the Qing court hated Yuan Shikai for his part in the palace revolution of 1898, they were compelled to consent to the marriage. This move of Yuan Shikai's was intended to win for him the support of pro-Qing monarchists.

The movement for the restoration of monarchy, inspired by Yuan Shikai, was gaining in scale. On 1 September 1915, the Council of State studied the petitions of different provinces submitted by the Chouanhui. On 2 October, having approved the proposals of the All-China Joint Petition Committee directed by Yuan Shikai agents, the Council of State instructed 'people's assemblies' to convene in all provinces and to hold a referendum. A law governing the structure of the 'people's assemblies' was published on 8 October. Delegates to the 'assemblies' were appointed by local monarchist officials and warlords. From 25 October to 20 November, with the procedure closely controlled and supervised, the referendum was held in all provinces. The movement for the restoration of the monarchy was directed by the All-China Joint Petition Committee, which drew up the petitions and addresses for various provinces.

On 11 December 1915, the Council of State approved the results of the 'referendum': all the 1,993 ballots had been cast for constitutional monarchy. And 'meeting' the 'will of the nation' so expressed, the Council of State resolved that a constitutional monarchic form of government shall be established. It repealed the law governing election of the president of the Republic of China, and, wasting no further time, addressed itself to Yuan Shikai 'on behalf of the people's assemblies', asking him to accept the title of emperor. At first, he turned the request down, saying that he did not want to break the oath he took before his inauguration as president. Besides, he was reluctant to hurt the feelings of the former Qing emperor. But following a second 'emphatic and urgent' request, Yuan officially announced on 12 December that he accepted the imperial title. The following day, at a festive reception, high-ranking government officials and generals offered him their congratulations on his 'election' as emperor. On the same day, 128 men of substance were granted various titles. A coronation committee was formed to prepare Yuan Shikai's enthronement on 1 January 1916, and it was announced that he would assume the reign title of Hongxian (All-Embracing Justice), with 1916 to be known henceforth as the 1st year of Hongxian.

At the height of the jubilation among reactionaries, with Yuan Shikai priming to ascend the Dragon Throne, a powerful anti-monarchic movement erupted throughout the country. An armed rebellion

broke out in South China, which the Chinese press described as the 'third revolution'.

The abuses of power and the arbitrary conduct of the officialdom, the militarists, and the feudal landlords, usurers and gentry, the *shenshi* and rich exploiter-peasants (kulaks), had driven the mass of the people to fury and despair. Word of the monarchic coup was the last straw, all the more so since the 20 million *yuan* that were to be spent for the coronation would weigh heavily on the people. The spontaneous anti-monarchic movement embraced toilers in town and countryside, the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the soldiers. But there was no strong revolutionary political party to guide a popular democratic movement. The revolutionary sentiment and spontaneous activity of the masses was often exploited by reactionary politicians for their selfish ends. The anti-monarchic movement lacked co-ordination and unity.

After reorganising the Guomindang in order to purge it of dissenters and casual quasi-revolutionary elements, Sun Yatsen and the other leaders of the new Chinese Revolutionary Party leapt to the other extreme of sectarianism. This was reflected in the structure of the party, and in its methods of operation. Not only did the party refuse to co-operate with other political parties of the opposition, but also divided its membership into several unequal categories: 'veterans' with advantages in the leadership, the 'meritorious' who could stand for elections, and the 'rank and file' whose only right was to elect. As a result, the party reduced itself to a small political coterie with few members and no ties with the mass of the people. It chose military conspiracy and individual terrorism as its chief methods of struggle. Its attempts to start an insurrection in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hunan, and other provinces in July 1914, ended in ignominious failure. An attempt in December to organise a mutiny aboard the warship *Zhao He* in Shanghai was also aborted. The only successful undertaking was an attempt on the life of the military chief of Shanghai, an active pro-monarchist figure, Zheng Rucheng.

Despite the organisational weakness and wrong methods of struggle, the political platform of the Chinese Revolutionary Party and the activity of its leader, Sun Yatsen, were on the whole progressive. In the Call for a March Against Yuan Shikai (1915), and especially in a second manifesto on 9 May 1916, Sun Yatsen exposed Yuan Shikai as an oath-breaker and traitor, and urged the people to overthrow the usurper and restore the 1912 provisional constitution, the parliament, and other republican democratic institutions. These ideas were extensively propagated in the journal *Minguo* (The Republic) and the *Minguo ribao* daily, published by Sun Yatsen, Zhu Zhixin, and others. Still, the party's political platform and tactics reflected its leaders' incomprehension of the role of the masses and

their vital needs. None of the party's leaders attempted to rally the masses, and lean on them, in the fight for democracy. So, the handful of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois revolutionaries that had come together in the exclusive underground organisation was unable, despite the courage and dedication of some, to assume guidance of the anti-monarchic movement.

Owing to Huang Xing's absence (he was still in the U.S.A.), the right-wing Guomindang people relied for leadership on Cen Chunxuan, who had been viceroy of South China under the Qing but had cast in his lot with the revolution. Following the monarchic restoration, the right-wingers, acting through the Discussion Group for European Affairs, established ties with former Guomindang members of parliament and leaders of the Progressive Party, calling for joint action against the monarchic coup. The Progressive Party, led by Liang Qichao, had continued to side with Yuan Shikai after the dissolution of parliament, and even backed Yuan against the patriotic movement that opposed the Twenty-One Demands. Liang described the popular protests as an 'absurd rebuke' that was due to 'incomprehension of the government's good intentions'. Not until the Chouanhui and other organisations clamouring for monarchic restoration had come into the open did Liang Qichao finally voice his opposition. In an article, 'Strange Approach to the Question of the Political System', he took an anti-monarchic stand, warning against 'premature picking of unripe fruit' and 'premature birth of the child', which, as he saw it, could create 'fierce turmoil and fragmentise the country'. In principle, it is true, he did not object to constitutional monarchy. 'I am always and at any time against revolution,' he wrote, 'for I have no illusions about the republic to this day.' With the anti-monarchic movement gaining in magnitude, however, Liang Qichao and other Progressive Party leaders decided to join in, seize the lead, and thereby avert any independent popular revolutionary action.

The Progressive Party made contact with warlords in the South-West and organised a military campaign against Yuan Shikai, known as the War for the Protection of the Republic. On 19 December 1915, General Cai E, former governor of Yunnan, arrived in the province after clandestinely leaving Beijing via Japan and Hong Kong with Japanese assistance. Here he established contacts with officers of the provincial army opposed to the monarchic restoration. On 23 December, Cai E, General Tang Jiyao, commander of the Yunnan army, and General Ren Kecheng, chief military inspector, telegraphed an ultimatum to Yuan Shikai, demanding that he revoke the monarchy and punish those culpable for the monarchic movement. Yuan was given until 10 a.m. on 25 December to make his reply. But no reply came, and Yunnan was proclaimed an indepen-

dent province. A Republican Protection Army was founded, and the republican political system was restored in the territory under its control. General Tang Jiyao was appointed commander of the Yunnan garrison, Cai E commander of the expeditionary troops advancing into neighbouring Sichuan (Zhu De, future prominent communist military leader, was in this army), Dai Ji commander of the troops heading for Guizhou province and western Hunan, and Li Liejun, a member of the Guomindang, commander of the troops designated to thrust into Guangxi and Guangdong.

Yuan Shikai counted on his numerically superior troops to eliminate the insurgent armies in quick order with the support of the Japanese imperialists, to whom he was prepared to grant new concessions. To negotiate with the Japanese in Tokyo, Yuan Shikai sent a special envoy, Zhou Ziqi, on the pretext of handing the Japanese emperor an honorary order. But the Japanese government abruptly rejected Zhou's diplomatic mission. It gave to understand that it would back the anti-monarchic insurrection of the southern warlords. In the circumstances, Yuan Shikai was compelled to postpone the day of his coronation. In Sichuan and Hunan, his troops suffered setback after setback. On 26 January, the military governor of Guizhou declared the independence of his province from Beijing. To try and improve matters, Yuan Shikai announced the convocation of the Legislative Yuan on 1 May 1916, and dissolved the Coronation Committee.

On 15 March 1916, Guangxi province, too, proclaimed its independence, and demanded that Yuan Shikai abdicate. General Lu Rongting, who was in supreme command of the Republican Protection Army in Guangxi and Guangdong, invited Liang Qichao to be his chief of general staff. After publishing his article on the untimeliness of restoring monarchy, Liang had had to flee from Beijing with General Cai E, and settled in the Japanese concession in Tianjin, whence he came to Shanghai on 18 December. In early March of the following year, assisted by the Japanese secret service, Liang Qichao reached Guangxi.

The anti-monarchic campaign gained in force. Yuan Shikai's position became so precarious that even his most loyal followers, the warlords Feng Guozhang, Zhang Xun, and others, advised him to abandon his monarchic ambitions. Yuan had no choice but to convene the Legislative Yuan, which revoked the monarchy and announced the re-establishment of the republic on 22 March 1916. Such was the ignominious end of the abortive monarchic coup. The reign of Hongxian had lasted a mere 83 days. After the monarchy was revoked, Yuan tried to hang on to the presidency and to enforce his military dictatorship. He re-appointed Xu Shichang his secretary of state, Duan Qirui chief of the general staff, and Li Yuanhong vice-

president. On their behalf, he approached General Cai E with a cease-fire offer in return for the revocation of the independence of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guizhou. But Cai E and the Republican Protection Army rejected Yuan's offer and demanded that he resign. On 6 April 1916, Guangdong province declared its independence, followed by Zhejiang province on the 12th.

The anti-monarchic movement demanded Yuan Shikai's resignation from all posts, and wanted him to be put outside the pale of the law. He tried to manoeuvre, to find a way out of the trap into which he had driven himself. On 22 April, he announced a 'voluntary' reorganisation of the government, and revival of the system of a cabinet responsible to the parliament. The powers of the president were substantially reduced.

On 1 May, the Republican Protection Army set up its general headquarters in Guangdong and Guangxi. Cen Chunxuan was appointed supreme commander, and Liang Qichao chief of the general staff. A military council was convened on 8 May, chaired by General Tang Jiyao. Cen Chunxuan was made its deputy chairman. The military council, which, in effect, performed the functions of a military government in South China, issued a categorical demand that Yuan Shikai resign the presidency. Yuan's already tenuous grip on power was clearly slipping. To top it all, General Chen Huan, commander in Sichuan, and General Tang Xiangming, in Hunan, rejected Yuan Shikai and proclaimed the independence of the two provinces. This betrayal by his once faithful watchdogs was a blow Yuan could not survive, his sudden death on 6 June 1916 providing an automatic solution to the question of his resignation.

Warlords Scramble for Spheres of Influence and the Attempt to Restore the Qing Dynasty in Power

The war against Yuan Shikai's military dictatorship started in the South-West provinces may have had the support of the mass of the people who had an intense dislike of the despotic feudalist regime. But it was essentially a war fought by warlords against warlords, and did not grow over into a people's war, a revolutionary war. Though a large segment of the soldiers and officers who participated in it were of democratic leanings, it was not the kind of war that could alter the social and economic system, or the country's political situation. Yuan Shikai's death did not end the warlordism that had been the foundation of his feudal compradore military dictatorship.

The war of the South against the North only made the central administration still weaker, and led to the country's division among countless feudal militarist cliques. Military governors (*dudu*), who

were in command of the armed forces of a province or several provinces, also performed the functions of civic administrators, and were, in fact, complete masters of the territory under their jurisdiction. By and large, the warlords were divided into two large camps: the northern (Beiyang) camp controlled the main provinces in North and East China, and the southern the provinces of South and South-West China. The camp of Beiyang warlords, however, was itself divided into a number of lesser cliques.

The three North-Eastern provinces of Fengtian, Jilin, and Heilongjiang, were under the undivided sway of the Fengtian clique of warlords headed by ex-brigand Zhang Zuolin. In the closing months of Qing rule, Zhang's troops were made part of the so-called Old Army under Zhang Xiluan, a Yuan Shikai watchdog. There were also units of the New Army in the North-East at the time. Then, after the Xinhai revolution, the Old Army was re-modelled on the lines of the New Army, and General Zhang Zuolin managed to worm himself into the post of its commander-in-chief. Fired by the ambition of ousting military governor Duan Zhigui from Fengtian, Zhang Zuolin promised Yuan Shikai in the early stages of the anti-monarchic rising in 1915 that he would lead his troops against the 'southern rebels' in defence of the monarchy, and asked for armaments and money to maintain his army. But on receiving what he needed, Zhang came out against the restoration of monarchy. He forced Duan Zhigui to 'voluntarily' step down from the governorship, and left Yuan Shikai no choice but to appoint him in Duan's place. From that day on, Zhang and his generals became undivided rulers of what was in effect the independent territory of the three North-Eastern provinces. The Fengtian clique of warlords was an obedient tool of the Japanese imperialists, who ran matters their own way in that part of China politically, militarily, and economically.

The northern and eastern provinces were controlled by the Zhili clique of warlord Feng Guozhang and the Anhui clique of Duan Qirui. The two were constantly at each other's throats, but declared a temporary truce after Yuan Shikai's death in order to rally forces against the south-western warlords. The in effect ceaseless struggle of these cliques culminated in later years (1920) in a complete break between them and a war. The Anhui clique, like that of Fengtian, was a tool of the Japanese, while the Zhili warlords took their cue chiefly from the Anglo-American imperialists.

General Yan Xishan was at the time undivided master of Shanxi province, having established himself there during the Xinhai revolution. He swore loyalty to Yuan Shikai during the monarchic coup d'état, but after Yuan's death began flirting with stronger warlord groups.

The neighbouring province of Shenxi was ruled by General Chen

Shufan, who gravitated towards the south-western group of militarists at the time of the anti-monarchic campaign. As military governor of the southern part of Shenxi, he proclaimed its independence, and succeeded in driving out and taking the place of the military governor of the province, General Lu Jiangzhang, who belonged to the Beiyang clique. Following Yuan Shikai's death Chen swore obedience to Duan Qirui, but was, in effect, complete master of Shenxi province.

The camp of the south-western warlords consisted of two large cliques: the Yunnan clique under Tang Jiyao, and that of Guangxi under Lu Rongting. Never for a day did the infighting between them slacken. After the Xinhai revolution, military power in Yunnan had been seized by General Cai E. When he left for Beijing in 1913, Tang Jiyao succeeded him as military governor. Afraid of losing his hold on power, Tang had refused to march in the anti-monarchic campaign, and became commander of the Yunnan garrison. His assistance to the army that went into the field against Yuan Shikai was nothing less than meagre. Tang's efforts were, indeed, centred on undermining Cai E's influence, and on edging the latter's followers out of the Yunnan army. So, after the anti monarchic campaign was ended, all power in Yunnan and part of Sichuan fell in effect into Tang Jiyao's hands.

The Guangxi general, Lu Rongting, had backed Yuan Shikai for a time after the Xinhai revolution. He had offered Yuan his services against the Yunnan warlords, but after receiving the requisite equipment and money declared himself commander of the Republican Protection Army in Guangxi and Guangdong. Pretending to fight General Long Jiguang, who sided with Yuan Shikai's monarchic coup, Lu entered and occupied the province of Guangdong.

Like the Yunnan clique, the Guangxi warlords had close ties with the British and French, who had considerable interests in South-West China under the protection of their armed forces in Indochina, Burma, and Hong Kong.

In other provinces, lesser warlord satraps oppressed and plundered territories under their control. Warlordism, a peculiar superstructure of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal Chinese society, was a highly specific phenomenon. The system thrived on the backwardness of the Chinese economy, the huge agrarian over-population, and predominance of feudal forms of exploitation and usury. Warlords cultivated and encouraged these outdated forms. This gave them the backing of local landlords, money-lenders, *shenshi*, and *tuhao*. They, too, were landed proprietors on a large scale. Zhang Zuolin and members of his family, for example, had large estates in Fengtian province. His closest associate, General Wu Junsheng, owned most of the land in Heilongjiang province. The military governor of Anhui

province, Ni Sichong, owned 80,000 *mu* of land in Fuyang county. General Yan Xishan ranked among the wealthiest landlords in Shanxi, warlord Cao Kun owned large tracts of land in Zhili, and his brother, General Cao Ying, owned nearly all arable land in Jinghai county, Zhili province. The warlords forcibly seized the peasants' crops, money, and other property, thus, in substance, obliterating the distinction between rents and taxes, duties and plunder, territorial domains and landed property.

The division of the vast expanses of China into warlord domains and the loose connection of the periphery with the centre, enabled the imperialist powers to use warlords as puppets. They armed and financed them, making them do their will, and carry through the colonial enslavement of the Chinese people. The warlords deposited their fortunes in foreign banks, and bought up shares in foreign and Chinese industrial and commercial enterprises. Since the inception of warlordism, it was one of the principal channels of the initial accumulation of capital in China, based on a system of semi-feudal government institutions.

Warlords maintained their armies through feudalistic exploitation of peasants, and rigid control of commerce and industry in their domains. They acted as compradores, and flourished on hand-outs received from foreign powers.

Impoverished and landless peasants and *declassé* urban elements were the chief source of recruits for the mercenary warlord armies. These primitively armed forces where discipline was maintained by corporal punishment, were fit for nothing but the clashes that occurred between their generals, and, indeed, for suppressing popular movements. Warlordism was a noxious and destructive phenomenon that made for the ruin and exhaustion of the country's productive forces.

When Yuan Shikai died, Li Yuanhong became president of the Republic of China, Feng Guozhang vice-president, and Duan Qirui premier. Duan, in fact, held all power, and tried to maintain a Yuan Shikai style military dictatorship. He showed no inclination to restore the 'old' 1912 constitution or convene the 'old' 1913 parliament. The bourgeois-landlord forces represented by deputies to the 'old' parliament from the southern provinces and the Guomindang, were vexed. At the height of their dispute with Duan Qirui, the naval commander in Shanghai, Li Dingxin, was persuaded by the Guomindang to announce on 25 June 1916 that he would take no orders from Beijing. Feng Guozhang, governor-general of Shanghai, Nanjing, and Jiangsu province, was alarmed. He exerted pressure on Duan Qirui, who was forced to accept the terms of the southerners.

On 29 June, president Li Yuanhong ordered the re-enactment of the provisional constitution of 1912, and convened the parliament

as elected in 1913. In the South, the dissolution of the Military Council of the Republican Protection Army was timed to coincide with this move.

At a session of the parliament on 1 August, Li Yuanhong was sworn in as president. In early September, the parliament endorsed the cabinet headed by premier Duan Qirui, and in October Feng Guozhang was re-elected vice-president. A temporary truce ensued between North and South. But the infighting between warlord cliques and between political groups continued. Sharp clashes erupted in the parliament. New alignments surfaced within the political groupings. The Progressive Party, for example, broke up into two organisations: the Constitution Research Association (Xianfa yanjiuhui) and the Constitution Discussion Society (Xianfa taolunhui). Some time later they merged again under Liang Qichao as the Research Group (Yanjiuxi). Old Guomindang leaders, with Zhang Ji at their head, formed a group of their own—the Society for the Discussion of Constitutional Government (Xianzheng shangxuehui), which later broke up into four splinter organisations.

A bitter struggle went on, both inside and outside the parliament, between Li Yuanhong, who was backed by the southern provinces, and Duan Qirui, who represented the Beiyang militarists. The culmination came with the parliamentary debate over China's participation in the world war on the side of the Entente. In effect, it mirrored the rivalry of the imperialist powers for predominance in China. Li Yuanhong was the man of the U.S. imperialists, and Duan Qirui a long-time agent of the Japanese. Since the outbreak of the world war relations between the United States and Japan had deteriorated. Japan, jockeying into positions of advantage in China, was out to tighten its economic grip on China, especially in Manchuria and the North. In 1916 alone, the Bank of Chosen granted three loans to shore up Chinese currency reserves in Fengtian province. The following year, new large loans totalling 200 million yen were granted to Duan Qirui's government. Known as the Nishihara loans, they yielded Japan a number of new concessions in the North-Eastern provinces.

In 1916, the United States joined in the scramble and applied itself to seizing control of China's communications and other industries. Between early April and the end of November 1916, the Chinese government concluded loan agreements with a number of large U.S. corporations. Sims and Carie Co. was granted concessions for the construction of five railways, the American International Corporation signed an agreement for drainage and irrigation works on the river Huai and a section of the Grand Canal, and the U.S. International Banking Corporation undertook to supply the Chinese government with 1.5 million to 2 million ounces of silver.

U.S. expansion in China and the Far East was resisted jointly by Japan, Britain, Russia, and France. But these countries, notably Britain and Japan, had more than enough disagreements among themselves, leading to a temporary honeymoon between tsarist Russia and Japan.

The long Russo-Japanese negotiations culminated in the conclusion of an alliance in June 1916, providing for joint action if any third power imperilled the interests of either contracting party in the Far East. As Lenin emphasised, the alliance was mainly directed against the people of China, though also against Britain and the United States.⁵

The contradictions between the imperialist powers grew more heated still over the question of China's participation in the world war. Britain, France, and Russia had tried from the start to bring China into it on their side. Japan, on the other hand, was opposed to China's involvement, fearing that it would come out of the war stronger militarily, and would demand the return of the former German possessions in Shandong. It therefore rejected the Entente's proposal of joint pressure on China to make it break relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Yuan Shikai, who was then preparing his monarchic coup, needed Japanese support and dragged his feet over China's entry into the world war.

The U.S.A. abstained from any statements on this score until 3 February 1917, when it broke off diplomatic relations with Germany over the latter's decision to resume submarine warfare. At that point, it suggested that China join the war, promising it many-sided aid. On 9 February, the Chinese government protested to Germany over the issue of submarine warfare, and threatened to break off diplomatic relations with it. To its surprise, however, the United States had had second thoughts and disapproved of the protest. On 26 February, U.S. minister Reinsch informed the Chinese government of a State Department directive saying it preferred China not to declare war on Germany in the event the U.S.A. joined the war.

Japan, on the other hand, demanded that the Chinese government break off diplomatic relations with Germany at once, even before the latter replied to its note of protest.

The about-turn in U.S. policy was prompted by fears that if China entered the war, control over the reorganised Chinese army would fall into the hands of the Japanese, who already had great influence on the Duan Qirui government. The Japanese, on the other hand, changed their stand and decided not to impede China's entry into the war, because they had obtained guarantees from Britain and the other members of the Entente in February 1917 that they would get the German possessions in Shandong and in the Pacific. Further-

more, it was clear since America had joined the war that Germany and its allies faced imminent defeat. And Japan did not want to complicate relations with the future victors at the coming peace conference. It figured, too, that in the new climate China's involvement in the war would enable it to gain a still firmer grip on that country.

On 3 March 1917, following an accord with the Japanese, the Duan Qirui government resolved to break off relations with Germany. This was officially announced on 14 March. President Li Yuanhong, however, fell in with the U.S. moves to keep China out of the war. He tried to exploit the anti-war sentiment of the masses and of certain military and political personalities. Feng Guozhang, Zhang Xun, Tang Shaoyi, Ma Junwu, and Wu Tingfang took his side.

Sun Yatsen, who had returned to China after Yuan Shikai's death and resided in Shanghai's French concession, spoke out against China's involvement in the unjust war of conquest. He pointed to its dangers for China, and called on the Chinese 'to maintain strict independence in the spirit of unshakeable sovereignty'. In 1917, he wrote that Japan and the United States had taken advantage of the war to amass huge profits. And after China had entered the war, he protested to the Duan Qirui government and the governments of Japan, Britain, and the United States. He and other forward-looking leaders were aware that on the pretext of China's participation in the war Duan was, in effect, priming for war inside the country against the republicans. Large segments of the Chinese people were opposed to China's involvement in the war, fearing the further strengthening of the Japanese imperialists and their puppet warlord cliques in China. A protest movement got into motion. The Shanghai Chamber of Commerce organised an anti-war campaign and called on the provincial chambers of commerce to join it.

Duan Qirui's government took severe action against the protesters, and first of all the republicans. Here Duan made the most of the support of the Beiyang militarist clique and that of other warlords and political groups, including members of the extinct Progressive Party and defectors from the Guomindang. To swing public opinion in favour of China's participation in the world war, the Council of State formed a Consultative Committee on International Politics (Guoji zhengwu pingyihui), in which Liang Qichao, Xiong Xiling, and Wang Daxie (three Progressive Party leaders), Wang Jingwei (a right-wing member of the Guomindang), Cao Rulin, Lu Zhengxiang, Sun Baoqi, Xu Shichang, and others, participated. After Duan had prepared the ground for actions modelled on those of his predecessor Yuan Shikai, the premier launched his campaign. On 25 February 1917, he convened a conference of military governors of various provinces. Under pressure of Japanese, British, and French

diplomats, the conference adopted a resolution favouring entry into the war against Germany. On 1 May, in the presence of the 20 military governors who had taken part in the conference, the Council of State took a similar decision. On 3 May, a large reception was held for members of parliament, at which they were subjected to a 'brainwashing'.

On 10 May, while the parliament was discussing the question of the war, Entente diplomats, to help Duan's government, demanded that severe measures should be taken against German nationals in China. They warned that if their request went unheeded, reprisals would follow. That day the parliament building was ringed by plain-clothes policemen, soldiers, and paid rowdies who passed themselves off as members of various public delegations. The picketers called out for an immediate declaration of war. When they learned that the deputies had refused to vote for it, they attacked them on Duan's orders and inflicted bodily damage. On 19 May, in protest, the parliament resolved to postpone the war debate until a new government was formed. Thereupon, some members of the cabinet handed in their resignations.

The day before, the English-language Beijing newspaper *Jingbao* reported the arrival in Beijing of General Tanaka, assistant chief-of-staff of the Japanese army in China. He had come to negotiate a separate treaty and a 100-million-yen military loan on the condition that China should invite Japanese military technicians and administrators to expand China's war industry and train its army. News of this enraged the Chinese masses, and *Jingbao's* editor-in-chief, Chen Youren, was arrested on Duan's orders for letting the cat out of the bag.

In their telegrams, Sun Yatsen, Tang Shaoyi, Cen Chunxuan, and prominent republicans in Guangzhou demanded that the hired thugs who had attacked members of parliament should be severely punished. They called on the Guomindang deputies to stand firm and vote against China's participation in the war. Duan Qirui and the military governors moved to dissolve the parliament. President Li Yuanhong declined to do their bidding. By an edict of 23 May, he dismissed Duan Qirui and appointed the pro-American Wu Tingfang acting premier. On 6 July, Reinsch said in Li's support that China should stay out of the war and occupy itself with uniting the country, and secure itself a worthy place in world affairs. The Japanese press pounced on the American diplomat's statement, charging that the U.S.A. was interfering in China's internal affairs.

Warlords of various provinces rushed to Duan Qirui's help. On 29 May, Ni Sichong, governor of Anhui, disavowed the president, followed by the governors of Fengtian, Shandong, Fujian, Henan, Zhejiang, Shenxi, and Zhili. The militarists demanded the immediate

dissolution of the parliament. The perturbed Li Yuanhong asked a few political leaders to mediate his disagreement with Duan Qirui, but they emphatically refused. At that critical hour, comfort came from an unexpected quarter. General Zhang Xun let Li know that he was willing to mediate a reconciliation between the president and the ex-premier.

Zhang Xun, once imperial viceroy of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, was a convinced monarchist. To demonstrate his loyalty to the Qing emperor, he, his officers and men, had refused to cut off their queues, and were quickly nicknamed 'pigtail army'. In 1913, during the 'second revolution', Zhang Xun fought the republicans on Yuan Shikai's side. He defeated the republican troops under Huang Xing at Nanjing, and became one of Yuan Shikai's most trusted followers as inspector-general of troops in the Yangzi basin, and military governor of Anhui.

For years, Zhang had been associated with the German imperialists, who had supplied his army with arms and ammunition from Qingdao. He retained German officers on his staff as advisers, and during the world war passed them off as newspaper correspondents. A diehard monarchist, Zhang also had secret relations with the pro-Qing Throne Party (Zongshedang). Pan Bao, a prominent member of the Throne Party, was his personal secretary and his contact with Kang Youwei, leader of the constitutional monarchists.

On 9 June 1916, soon after Yuan Shikai's death, General Zhang Xun called a conference of militarists from various provinces at his headquarters in Xuzhou. The conference resolved that the new regime should honour the abdication terms guaranteed by Yuan, preserve all Yuan's titles posthumously, protect the life and property of Yuan's family, and boycott the 'rebellious' Guomindang members of the parliament. It was, in short, a political platform dear to the hearts of reactionary politicians and warlords.

On 21 September, the second conference called by Zhang Xun formed a 13-province committee to plot an anti-republican conspiracy and restore the Qing monarchy. So, at the height of the Li-Duan conflict over China's participation in the world war, the Japanese, seeing the precarious position of Duan Qirui, decided to win General Zhang Xun to their side against Li Yuanhong, and mediated a secret compact between Duan and Zhang. On 8 June 1917, Zhang Xun and his troops entered Tianjin on the invitation of Li Yuanhong. Zhang promised Li his support if the Qing abdication terms were included in the constitution, Confucianism was recognised as the national religion, and the armed forces increased by another 20 battalions. Li said he would consent to these demands, but asked Zhang to help abolish the independence of various provinces, to wind up his army headquarters in Tianjin, and secure the return of various

provincial troops to their original quarters. Furthermore, provincial authorities were to stop collecting taxes that were intended for the central government. Under Zhang Xun's pressure, Li Yuanhong announced the dissolution of the parliament—this in defiance of the acting premier, Wu Tingfang. On the following day the 'pigtail troops' entered Beijing. Kang Youwei, disguised as a peasant, also came to the capital on Zhang Xun's invitation. Many old Qing dignitaries, who had jointly with Zhang and Kang drawn up a plan for the restoration of the Qing dynasty, popped up in Beijing as well.

On 1 July, on Zhang Xun's instructions, war minister Wang Shizhen, army commander Jiang Chaozong, and former Qing dignitary Liang Dingfen 'begged' Li Yuanhong to sign a statement they had drawn up on the 'return of power to the Qing dynasty'. Li declined, and sought refuge in the Japanese embassy, having prudently taken along the presidential seal.

That day, Zhang Xun and Kang Youwei went to the imperial palace in Beijing and asked the former Qing boy-emperor Pu Yi to set his seal to a manifesto and edict they had drawn up beforehand. The manifesto said that the unbearable hardships inflicted on the people by the republic had compelled them—Zhang Xun, Feng Guozhang, Lu Rongting, and other generals—to ask the emperor to restore the monarchy and re-assume power, which had been 'temporarily transferred to former Qing minister Yuan Shikai to try the experiment of a republican regime'. The manifesto announced the introduction of a constitutional monarchy, and promised that all treaties and agreements concluded by the republican government with foreign states, and all terms of loans, along with all other commitments, would retain their validity. The manifesto also announced that the criminal codes of the Qing dynasty would be reintroduced. The emperor's edict provided for the convocation of conferences of provincial representatives (three from each) appointed by governors-general to discuss the procedure of forming a parliament and drafting a constitution. The same edict said that 1917 would henceforth be considered the 9th year of Xuantong, i.e. the 9th year of the reign of Pu Yi (in place of the 6th year of the republic). The lunar calendar, the Qing administrative system, the titles, and the names of offices and institutions were all reintroduced. General Zhang Xun was granted the title of valiant prince, and appointed minister for North China affairs and viceroy of Zhili province, General Feng Guozhang was made prince and viceroy of South China, and Lu Rongting prince and viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi. Li Yuanhong, too, was accorded the title of prince, but was given no office. A seven-man Political Council was set up, headed by Zhang Xun and consisting of his followers. A cabinet of ministers was formed, in which Liang Dunyan was made foreign minister, Zhang Zhenfang finance

minister, Lei Zhenchun war minister, Wang Shizhen chief-of-staff of the armed forces, and Zhu Jiabao minister for civil affairs. Xu Shichang, Kang Youwei, and thirteen other prominent politicians, were granted honorary office, but with no actual power.

The five-coloured national flag was replaced with the dragon flag, symbol of the monarchy. Long since forgotten politicians re-surfaced in the political arena. The price of second-hand official uniforms, until then available only for hire at undertakers' offices and from junk dealers, went up steeply. Wigs and attachable queues were in great demand. Horsehair became a sought after commodity.

Zhang Xun's soldiers had the run of the city, plundering houses and ransacking shops and warehouses. Food prices soared, while paper money dropped in value. The terrified populace of the capital was in a panic. Many of the provincial military governors who had initially backed Zhang Xun, were now opposed to him and the new arrangements. The Japanese, who had a stake in weakening China, originally supported the monarchic coup, then changed their tactics abruptly, throwing their support behind Duan Qirui and aiding him to suppress the monarchic putsch. Japan gave Duan 1 million *yuan*, and the latter, along with Feng Guozhang, acting on a plan worked out with the assistance of Lieutenant-General Harunoki, a Japanese military adviser, went into the open against Zhang Xun.

On 2 July 1917, Duan and Liang Qichao appeared in Machang (south of Tianjin), and on the following day Duan proclaimed himself commander-in-chief of the campaign against the 'rebels'. He appointed his brother, General Duan Qigui, commander of the western front, and General Cao Kun commander of the eastern front. Duan's assault force consisted of troops quartered at Baoding under Cao Kun's command, and of the 16th brigade stationed west of Tianjin under General Feng Yuxiang. Liang Qichao, Tang Hualong and others were appointed advisers at the commander-in-chief's headquarters. On 4 July, Duan published an address to the people and a declaration announcing his military campaign against Zhang Xun. The two instruments studiously avoided placing any blame for the monarchic putsch on the Qing court. Young Emperor Pu Yi was lauded, in fact, for his 'sincere tractability' and 'understanding of the international situation'.

Duan pointed out in both the address and declaration that the campaign was directed against 'the coup which pursued the aim of altering the already changed political system', and that it was mounted 'to avoid interference by friendly powers'. The documents explained that the campaign was motivated less by 'sympathy for the republic', and essentially by the need 'to extricate the Qing dynasty from a difficult situation'. Duan Qirui promised that after suppressing the putsch, the abdication terms would be strictly abided by and that no

one of the participants in the overturn save Zhang Xun would be held responsible. Liang Qichao heaped the blame wholly on just two men: General Zhang Xun, and his former teacher Kang Youwei. He described the former as 'an insatiable and greedy soldier', and the latter as 'a boastful scholar'.

Within six days Duan's troops approached the capital. Zhang Xun's soldiers took to their heels, but not before they hurriedly cut off their queues. By agreement with the foreign powers, Zhang was given asylum in the Dutch legation, while Kang Youwei managed to vanish from Beijing as mysteriously as he had appeared in it. None of the instigators of the plot suffered. The 'great Qing dynasty' was deposed a second time after a reign of 12 days. Emperor Pu Yi and the Qing imperial clan withdrew to their vast Beijing palace. Here they continued to receive a huge pension from the republic, and to enjoy honours and privileges.

Duan Qirui's Military Dictatorship and Sun Yatsen's Fight for the Constitution

On 12 July 1917, having taken Beijing and put down the monarchic putsch, Duan Qirui reassumed the office of prime minister, while Feng Guozhang became acting president in place of Li Yuanhong, who resigned.

Power at the centre fell totally into the hands of the Beiyang militarists. Duan's position was considerably strengthened. He proclaimed himself 'founder of the second republic', and let it be understood that since the first republic had been torn down by Zhang Xun's monarchic coup, all its laws, the parliament and other democratic institutions, had become null and void, and there could be no question of their direct revival. Sun Yatsen, all faithful republicans, and the men in power in the southern provinces, on the other hand, demanded the revival of the 'old constitution' of 1912, the 'old parliament' of 1913, the return to office of president Li Yuanhong, and the immediate resignation of Duan's government.

Goaded by the foreign powers, notably Japan, Duan Qirui's government declared war on Germany on 14 August 1917. A War Participation Army was activated with Japanese help under the premier's own command. Its strength was continuously increased, and it was given modern arms. It was in Duan's books to put the southern and all other warlords under his thumb, and unite the country by force of arms. He had not the slightest intention of really taking part in the European war.

In return for declaring war on Germany, Duan hoped to obtain vital concessions from the foreign powers. When the dust had settled,

however, he found that the concessions were negligible. The Entente countries merely deferred payment to them of their share of the Boxer indemnity for five years, and customs duties for foreign goods were raised 5 per cent, but with the provision that the value of the goods should be determined beforehand by a special mixed commission formed of representatives of the foreign powers and of China.

Behind China's back and contrary to its interests, Japan and the United States concluded the so-called Lansing-Ishii Agreement, under which the U.S.A. acknowledged Japan's 'special interests' in China, notably in that part which bordered on 'its possessions', while Japan pledged to abide by the 'open-door' principle.

The Japanese were full of praise for Duan Qirui's plan of unifying China by force of arms. They granted him a loan of 10 million *yuan* 'for improvements', and followed this up on 26 September with a 20-million-yen loan for 'developing production', and on 12 October with a loan of 4,511,251 yen for the construction of the Jilin-Changchun railway on the condition that Japanese technical and administrative personnel would be invited to participate. By means of these loans, Japan acquired rights to build and operate railways, construct telegraph and radio communications, work forests and minerals, especially in the North-East, and control the Chinese army. The Duan government enlisted the services of numerous Japanese and other foreign military and political advisers to help it work out the plan for the 'military unification of the country'.

When China entered the world war, the struggle between North and South gained in intensity. Members of the dissolved parliament had left Beijing for Shanghai and Guangzhou. They made common cause with the south-western warlords, and campaigned against the Duan government. Protesting against the dissolution of the parliament and the abuses of the Beiyang militarists, Sun Yatsen called on the people of China to oppose the Beijing government and protect the 1912 constitution.

On 17 July 1917, Sun Yatsen set out for Guangzhou with a Chinese naval squadron that had gone against the Beijing government. More warships, under the command of Admiral Cheng Biguang, a follower of Sun Yatsen's, arrived in Guangzhou on 22 July.

The members of parliament gathered in Guangzhou convened an extraordinary session on 25 August, and resolved to form a military government of South China. On 1 September, Sun Yatsen was elected head of government with the rank of generalissimo by a vote of 84 out of 91, and Tang Jiyao and Lu Rongting were made his deputies with the rank of marshals. On 10 September, after being sworn in, Sun assumed his duties. His deputies, however, turned down their posts on the plea that though they opposed the person of Duan Qirui, they were not against the Beijing government as such.

The military government of South China did not become a truly democratic administration, though it did declare its resolve to fight for the 1912 constitution. Neither the government programme of 30 August, nor the statements of the parliament, nor the oath taken by Sun Yatsen contained any specific political demands. Sun and his Chinese Revolutionary Party had no links with the broad mass of the people, no armed forces of its own, and was therefore compelled to make common cause with the south-western warlords, who went out of their way to restrict Sun's military and political activity. Following the establishment of the South China military government, a northern march was declared, known as the war in defence of the constitution or the war between North and South. But whenever the Yunnan, Guangxi, and Sichuan generals, who controlled the armed forces, stood to profit, they did not hesitate to transact deals with northern warlords.

In the northern camp, meanwhile serious conflict brewed between the Zhili and Anhui cliques. Duan Qirui, as we already know, was out to unify the country by armed force and wanted the civil war to go on, while Feng Guozhang was eager to negotiate with the South and wanted a cease-fire. In short, unity was in very short supply in both the southern and northern camps. The civil war dragged on until 1918, though with many intervals.

Duan Qirui, who had promised a swift victory over the South, had obviously over-estimated his strength. The fortunes of war swung against him. In November 1917, after a bad drubbing in Hunan and Sichuan, the northern armies of generals Fan Guozhang and Wang Ruxian sued for peace. General Li Tiancai, who had captured the towns of Jingzhou and Xinyan in Hubei, announced his opposition to the Beijing government. A number of military governors of the Zhili clique came out in favour of an armistice with the South, among them Cao Kun (Zhili), Wang Zhanyuan (Hubei), Li Chun (Jiangsu), and so on. Duan had no choice but to resign.

After the hostilities petered out, negotiations were launched between the warring camps, at which Sun Yatsen demanded the reintroduction of the 1912 constitution and the reinstatement of the 1913 parliament. The northerners would not respond, and the talks collapsed.

The militarists of the Anhui clique insisted on carrying on the war. A conference of provincial military governors in Tianjin resolved to resume the fighting. A northern army under Wu Peifu thrust rapidly in a southerly direction and over-ran the provinces of Hubei and Hunan, reaching the foothills of Hengshan along the border of Guangdong province. Duan Qirui, who had been made commander of troops after his resignation, took heart. Japanese advisers helped him raise the combat capacity of his armies. He came to terms with Gen-

eral Zhang Zuolin that the Fengtian clique would move its troops from Manchuria to the interior of China. This show of strength helped Duan persuade Feng Guozhang to re-appoint him premier, which the latter did on 23 March 1918.

Wu Peifu, the Zhili warlord, however, refused to serve Duan Qirui. He stopped his southward offensive and made a deal with the southwestern militarists. The Guangxi warlords and members of parliament of the Political Science Group (Zhengxuehui), negotiated secretly with Wu Peifu behind Sun Yatsen's back. In February 1918, they engineered the assassination of Admiral Cheng Biguang, commander-in-chief of the navy and a loyal follower of Sun Yatsen. Sun was now deprived of reliable military support. On 20 May, a special session of parliament, convened in Guangzhou, stripped Sun Yatsen of the rank of generalissimo of the South China military government on the pretext of establishing a seven-man directory. In effect, however, the administration fell into the hands of the chief Guangxi militarist, the warlord Lu Rongting. Though made a member of the directory, Sun Yatsen had no effective power.

The directory was out to secure the best possible compromise deals with the North, and cared little about restoring the 1912 constitution and 1913 parliament. In the circumstances, on 20 May Sun Yatsen left Guangzhou for Shanghai via Shantou. Sun's stay in office as head of the Guangzhou military government had been a good lesson for him. He learned that warlord armies were an unreliable power base. And seeing no solution, he withdrew from practical politics.

On regaining the post of premier, Duan Qirui, getting Japanese military and financial aid, gradually consolidated his position. He bribed officials, warlords, and politicians, and formed his own political party, the Anfu Club (named after the Beijing hotel where it had its headquarters).

On 12 August, a new parliament, consisting mainly of Anfu Club people, opened in Beijing. Its members were 'elected' under the supervision of the northern warlords, and it had no deputies from the southern provinces. On 4 September, this parliament elected Xu Shichang president of the republic. Xu had no military power at his disposal, and all real power therefore remained in Duan's hands.

The southern military government refused to recognise the new president and the Anfu Club parliament. It resumed hostilities against the northern warlords. On 31 August, deputies of the old parliament dissolved by Duan Qirui in 1917, gathered in Guangzhou and proclaimed their intention to call a constitutional conference and elect the lawful president of the republic.

In September 1918, owing to the complicated situation, Duan was again compelled to resign.

At the end of 1918, the civil war between North and South ended. New problems had arisen in the political arena in the wake of the world war. The country came to a new period. The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, which raised the curtain on an era that influenced the course of world history, also affected all subsequent events in China.

Social-Economic Change in China at the Time of the First World War and the Condition of the Masses

Far-reaching economic and political change occurred in China at the time of the First World War. The Xinhai revolution, though indeterminate and incomplete, created favourable conditions for the growth of national capitalism—more favourable at least than at the time of the Qing monarchy. The war had compelled the European powers to moderate their appetite for economic expansion in China, which had the effect of strengthening Japanese and U.S. positions there, on the one hand, and of furthering the development of national industry, on the other. The decline in foreign imports reduced China's foreign trade deficit, which went down from 213,014,752 silver *liang* in 1914 to only 16,188,270 *liang* in 1919. This greatly favoured the growth of Chinese national industry. In 1900, for example, China had two flour mills, in 1916 it had 67, and in 1918 as many as 86. In 1914, wheat flour imports exceeded exports by 2,030,000 *dan*, whereas in 1915 exports exceeded imports by 37,952 *dan*, and by as much as 2,007,355 *dan* in 1918.

China's light industry registered the greatest growth of all. From 1913 to 1920, as many as 675 enterprises were built by Chinese national interests in 23 consumer fields, with the highest growth rate witnessed in textiles owing to the steep drop in cotton yarn imports. In 1913, the textile industry had 484,192 spindles, and 658,748 in 1919. In 1913, exports of raw silk totalled 70,150 *dan*, and 118,028 *dan* in 1919. The tobacco, match, dye and other light industries also recorded rapid growth.

In 1914, new Chinese investment stood at the 62 million *yuan* mark, and at 155 million in 1920. In 1914, enterprises with assets of 500,000 *yuan* and over accounted for just 4 per cent of total, whereas in 1920 for 14 per cent. The accumulation of national capital also led to the establishment of new Chinese banks, with banking capital increasing substantially. In addition to the seven Chinese banks with total assets of 75 million *yuan* that had existed before 1912, another 43 banks with total assets of 102.7 million *yuan* opened their doors between 1913 and 1919.

But national industry grew chiefly in the consumer field. The other fields developed less intensively. Railways were built on a relatively moderate scale. The growth of river and sea shipping, too, was moderate. Heavy industry expanded insignificantly. Coal output in 1919, for example, rose to a mere 20,055,000 tonnes from 13,640,000 tonnes in 1914. And out of this total, only 50.74 per cent fell to the share of Chinese capital in 1913, and only 55.2 per cent in 1919. Production of pig iron went up from 300,000 tonnes in 1914 to 447,594 tonnes in 1919, and that of iron ore from 1,005,000 to 1,861,000 tonnes. As before, production of means of production was at a low mark. The absence of engineering plants caused imports of machinery to go up and up. Machines worth 4.6 million *yuan* were imported in 1913, and 22.3 million *yuan*'s worth in 1920.

Despite its visible growth during the First World War, national industry was exceedingly under-developed. The country was still economically dependent on the foreign powers, for whom it was a convenient agrarian appendage and source of raw materials. As much as 662,632 tonnes of iron ore and 325,158 tonnes of pig iron, or 70 per cent of the total produced, were shipped out of China in 1919.

During that time, foreign monopolists in China were investing heavily, and primarily, in trade. In 1914, the fixed assets of foreign firms were worth 1,000 million dollars, with 83.1 per cent of this sum in commercial enterprises and only 16.9 per cent in industry, chiefly mining and manufacturing. Foreign firms and factories engaged chiefly in assembly and final processing of ready industrial goods. The same was true of repair shops working on imported machinery and imported raw materials.

The war-time easing of European competition opened the field for Japanese and U.S. business. Japan and the U.S.A. stepped up exports to China. Japanese-owned and American enterprises there increased production.

The following figures give an idea of China's trade with various foreign powers at that time with 1912 taken as 100.

	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Britain	125	141	114	116	86	83
Russia	101	99	115	137	92	32
Germany	128	81	45	6		
U.S.A.	103	114	136	176	219	190
Japan	126	131	135	181	224	275

Japan forged into first place in China's foreign trade. Japanese imports to China totalled 127,503,933 customs *liang* in 1914, and 120,249,514 *liang* in 1915. Exports to Japan were respectively

64,616,059 and 77,676,817 *liang*. For China the balance of trade was strongly unfavourable—China was 62,503,933 *liang* in the red in 1914, and 42,572,697 *liang* in 1915. The slight decline of imports from Japan was due to the anti-Japanese boycott in China. In 1917 Japanese imports and exports went up considerably, amounting to 105,773,819 and 221,666,891 *liang* respectively. That year China was as much as 115,893,072 *liang* in the red. Japanese trade accounted for 19.75 per cent of China's total foreign trade in 1913, and for 39.45 per cent in 1919.

In addition to the huge loans they gave to China's warlord governments on highly unfavourable terms for the latter, Japanese monopolies invested large sums in industry. In the period from 1914 to 1921, Japan built 222 factories and mines in China, with the number of spindles at Japanese-owned textile mills rising from 111,936,000 in 1913 to 332,922,000 in 1919, and the number of looms from 806,000 to 1,486,000. At Japanese-owned mines, coal output went up from 2.2 million to 3 million tonnes. Japanese interests controlled 85 per cent of the blast-furnaces in China. Twenty-six banks financed and serviced Japanese economic needs in China in 1916.

In the opening years of the First World War, U.S. imperialists, too, substantially invigorated and expanded their economic positions in China. U.S. imports to China in 1918 were nearly 200 per cent greater than in 1913, when the U.S.A. accounted for but 7.5 per cent of China's total foreign trade. Before the end of 1919, this percentage had risen to 16.4. The United States ranked third in China's foreign trade. In three years, 1914-1916, the U.S.A. signed six agreements with the Yuan Shikai government, granting it loans totalling 50 million dollars. In return, Americans were accorded rights to build railways and naval bases, and other privileges. In the summer of 1918, a banking corporation was formed in the U.S.A. (Morgan, Kuhn, Leib & Co.), consisting initially of 36 and later of 43 banks, with the purpose of establishing an international consortium under U.S. headmanship to exploit China's wealth.

The British imperialists, though embroiled in the European war and contending with vigorous Japanese and U.S. competition, managed, by and large, to hang on to their positions. At British-owned textile mills, in fact, the number of spindles and looms increased by roughly 60 per cent during the period.

The war-time industrial growth in China had far-reaching social and economic repercussions. The expansion of national capital whetted the contradictions between the rising Chinese national bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialist interests, as well as the country's feudalistic warlords. This was one side of the coin. The other was the aggravated conflict among the imperialist powers, sharpened by the Japanese and U.S. economic expansion. Further-

more, the development of factory production led to numerical growth of the Chinese working class, exacerbation of class contradictions, and invigoration of the workers' class struggle against foreign and national capitalists.

In 1913, China had approximately 650,000 industrial workers. By 1918, according to the incomplete figures of the ministry of agriculture and trade, their number had gone up to 1,749,339, and to 2,352,000 by 1919. These figures did not include the more than 10 million craftsmen, artisans, and wage labourers in commerce, and the many millions of farm labourers. The table below shows the number of workers in the various economic branches:

	1918	1919
Manufacturing	638,641	1,110,000
Transport	221,811	220,000
Mining	530,885	872,000
Public utilities	12,000	—
Government enterprises	21,640	—
Foreign enterprises	324,362	—
Port workers	—	150,000
<i>Total</i>	1,749,339	2,352,000

Working conditions were appalling. The working day at factories and manual enterprises ranged from 11 to 16 hours. Wages, on the other hand, were miserly. At the time of the world war, most workers earned a mere 1 or 2 *fen* daily, and 3 or 4 at best, while a *dan* of rice cost something like 10 *yuan* (1 *yuan*=100 *fen*). A Chinese worker received one-seventh of an average British worker's wage, and one-fourth that of a Japanese worker. The vast supply of manpower (what with the massive unemployment and agrarian over-population), coupled with extensive use of female and child labour in the light industries, enabled industrialists to intensify exploitation, while keeping wages down to a stark minimum. The high intensity of labour and absence of safety engineering led to endless accidents. Between 1914 and 1919, only by official Chinese figures, more than 24,000 workers were seriously hurt, as many as 1,396 lethally. Total absence of hygiene and sanitation, the polluted, unventilated, moist and dark premises, and unbearable heat, brought on infectious diseases. In the absence of protective labour legislation and social insurance, workers received neither wages nor allowances during illness or enforced idleness.

Chinese workers were exposed to triple oppression: by the employer, the feudalistic militarist state, and foreign colonialists hellbent on amassing the greatest possible profits. The Chinese and

foreign capitalists had close contacts with the warlords, and this for many years permitted them to retain the feudal system of labour contracts and contractors. Acting as agents of the capitalist employer, the contractors had broad hiring and firing powers. They paid the workers' wages, and plundered and oppressed them ruthlessly. This inhuman system had its roots in the semi-feudal order and was sustained by the agrarian over-population which created a vast manpower surplus not needed in agriculture.

The Chinese proletariat fought exploitation long before any working-class organisation emerged in the country. The initial strikes in the early 20th century were essentially spontaneous. The Qing government took draconian measures to put down workers' unrest. Participation in a strike was qualified as a criminal offence. But neither government reprisals nor employers' threats nor foreign interference could force the workers to their knees.

Seventy-eight strikes were registered in China from 1897 to 1913. During the war years their number increased. Seventeen strikes were registered in 1916, twenty-one in 1917, and thirty in 1918. Each successive strike surpassed those of the preceding period in scale. At some factories, strikes flared up several times a year, and some lasted for as long as a month. In 1914 workers of three Shanghai shipping companies went on strike, in 1915 miners in Anyuan and 3,000 weavers in Suzhou, in 1916 printing workers in Beijing, workers at Shanghai's British-owned tobacco factories and 1,700 workers in Tianjin, in 1917 miners in Shuikoushan and 3,000 workers of the British-American Tobacco Company in Shanghai, and in 1918 more than a thousand Shanghai textile workers.

The bulk of the workers were concentrated at foreign enterprises in the port cities, and the labour movement in China was therefore of an anti-imperialist complexion from the beginning. In 1905, for example, a strike broke out at the Yinghan printing plant in Shanghai because its foreign manager forbade the workers to print handbills calling for an anti-American boycott, and another strike at Shanghai's Huaxin Spinning Mill was called against the Chinese management's intention of letting the mill go to Japanese interests.

Chinese workers fought stubbornly against the French authorities' intention, agreed to by the Beijing government, to extend the limits of the French concession in Tianjin in 1916. The city's factory workers went on strike, and were joined by the staffs of French-owned hotels and shops and even by Chinese constables on the French police force. The power lines to the concession were cut. Garbage removal was stopped, and streets were not swept. The strike paralysed business, and compelled the French authorities to abandon their expansionist plan.

At that time, the Chinese working class had no programme of its

own, and advanced no political demands. There was neither a workers' party nor any trade unions. Struggles for better working conditions were poorly organised and disunited. Led mainly by various secret societies, brotherhoods, native associations and guilds, the workers came under the influence of self-seeking middlemen, merchants or bandit chiefs, who diverted them from the right road.

All the same, the working class gradually began to play a fairly prominent part in the country's political and economic life. Though foreign employers and domestic reactionaries tightened their oppressive grip, workers benefited from the influence of the international labour movement. The soil was fertilised for the future spread of Marxist-Leninist ideas, for class organisation, and the establishment of a political party.

The world war years were marked by an aggravation of the agrarian crisis, intensification of feudal landlord exploitation, and ruin of the peasantry.

The decline of agriculture saw larger and larger tracts of arable land being abandoned—358,235,867 *mu* in 1914, as much as 404,369,943 *mu* in 1915, slightly less (390,363,021 *mu*) in 1916, the huge area of 924,583,899 *mu* in 1917, and 848,935,745 *mu* in 1918.

What made matters worse was the inexorable drop in crop yields (*piculs per mu*):

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Rice	3.692	5.158	2.180	2.188	1.664
Wheat	0.942	0.954	0.388	0.642	0.648
Beans	0.717	0.720	0.563	0.719	0.530

In 1917, people in part of Hunan province suffered terribly from flooding. Crops and cattle perished. Millions were left homeless, and without food. From July 1917 to April 1918, floods hit 103 counties in China, or an area of over 10,000 sq. km. As much as 24,169,720 *mu* of crops perished, leaving 6,351,344 people destitute. Some provinces were ravaged by locusts, others by droughts and other natural calamities. The stricken population received no aid. On the contrary, landlords and militarists made the most of the situation to fill their pockets. Exposing the crimes of Zhili warlord Cao Kun and his warlord brother Cao Yin, members of the Association of Servicemen Residing in Shanghai wrote in an address to the people: 'During the flood in Zhili province in 1918, Cao Kun used the money he had amassed by plunder to buy all rice fields in Xiaozhan district for next to nothing. But when water poured into Cao Kun's land, he ordered the southern dike to be torn down. Ten villages were flooded, the crops destroyed, and people and cattle drowned. The villagers

had begged Cao Kun on their knees not to tear down the dike, but instead of desisting from his criminal act he ordered the population, including women, old men and children, to be driven into the flood area, and none of them escaped with their lives. Money was being collected in the country in aid of the flood victims, but Cao Kun used part of it to lay a garden beside his mansion. This was unheard-of avarice, and an evil deed.'

Many land deeds were lost during the flood. Cao Yin took advantage of this and drove wooden stakes with signboards into the soil on many of the land lots to indicate that they now belonged to him. Their owners went to courts of law, but these usually took the side of the powerful warlord and fined the plaintiffs. That was how Cao Yin took possession of land worth 100,000 *yuan*.

The various warlord cliques and the continuous strife between them caused untold suffering to the toiling mass of people. The warlord armies grew in size in the years of the world war. In 1914, China's land forces numbered 457,000, and 850,000 in 1918. In 1910, military expenditures totalled 102 million *yuan*, and nearly 153 million in 1916. Twenty-seven per cent of the Beijing government's budget went for military expenditures in 1913, and 40 per cent in 1914. (These figures, published by the finance ministry, were, by all evidence, substantially minimised.) If arms purchases abroad and sums paid to various warlords, and the like, were added, it would be found that some 70 per cent of the nation's budget was spent for military purposes, and as much as 94 per cent of some provincial budgets as well.

Foreign loans to warlord governments covered by various items of revenue were another heavy burden for the masses to bear. China's participation in the European war, too, took a heavy toll. Some 130,000 Chinese coolies were sent to France and Mesopotamia to build fortifications. Few of them returned. Coolies were also recruited for the construction of the Murmansk railway and for digging jobs in tsarist Russia. A large number of Chinese seamen serving on British ships lost their lives in the submarine war. China's property losses in the war amounted to more than 220 million *yuan*.

The Ideological Struggle and the New Culture Movement

The defeat of the bourgeois Xinhai revolution generated intricate processes in the country's ideological life. While members of the bourgeois-landlord constitutional monarchy movement (Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Yan Fu, and so on) went over to the extreme reactionary camp, deep rifts appeared within the bourgeois demo-

cratic element. Most former Guomindang leaders who had made common cause with the liberals, bowed before the reactionary feudalist warlord and compradore Beiyang clique. Like the constitutionalists, they sought an answer to their doubts in old-time Confucianism.

A segment of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals still associated their dream of the country's regeneration with Western assistance, borrowing bourgeois philosophical and political doctrines from European nations, the United States, and Japan. And the imperialist powers were certainly not remiss in inundating China with their colonialist ideology. In addition to educationalist ideas, the most widespread doctrines were those of positivist philosophy and sociology, and the irrationalist philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*). Classical positivism had, indeed, come to China back in the 19th century. Yan Fu and other liberal scholars propagated the theory of evolution as a law of progress to countervail the theory of revolutionary change. Espousing 'social Darwinism', Yan Fu, Ge Xiao, Chen Changheng, and others, preached the theory of Malthus, and sought a biological rather than social and economic explanation of the crisis that was racking China, blaming it on the country's over-population. The Malthusian theory was propagated with especial zeal at the time of the world war. Chinese anarchists Wu Zhihui, Li Shizeng, Zhang Ji, and Liu Shifu countered the theory of class struggle and revolution with Herbert Spencer's synthetic system of society and P.A. Kropotkin's theory of mutual assistance. Scientific elements of classical positivism were overshadowed by reactionary philosophical schemes—such as those of Ernst Mach, those of pragmatism, and the like, propagated by Hu Shi, Wu Zhihui, and others, who denied that scientific truth and laws of social development were knowable.

Also widespread in China was the Philosophy of Life. This applied primarily to the irrationalism and pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer as expounded by Wang Guowei, consonant with the mood of the bourgeois intelligentsia, which had lost heart after the failure of the Xinhai revolution. Also under the head of the Philosophy of Life came Bergsonian intuitivism. Zhang Junmai, Liang Shuming, and other active Bergsonians expounded the theory of the mystical capacity of intuition and Bergson's biological *élan vital*, diverting the attention of the Chinese intelligentsia from scientific knowledge and study of the laws of social development.

The preoccupation was with idealistic philosophy. Reactionary political doctrines had wide-ranging currency. Missionaries awakened an interest in Christianity, but alongside there was a revival of Confucianism, and a certain interest in modernised Buddhism.

Yet the progressive section of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois

intelligentsia, which clung to its democratic aspirations and took the failure of the revolution closest to heart, was casting about for a new road to China's salvation. The most articulate spokesmen of this group were Sun Yatsen, his closest followers, and the New Youth, the left wing of the New Culture movement headed by Li Dazhao.

In 1916, when Sun Yatsen returned from abroad to Shanghai, he sat down to write his long since conceived capital theoretical work, in which he meant to elaborate an exhaustive programme for China's future revolutionary reconstruction. The book was called *Plans for the National Reconstruction (Jianguo fanglue)* and consisted of three parts: 'Spiritual Reconstruction', 'Material Reconstruction', and 'Social Reconstruction'. The work was not completed until 1919, but separate parts of it appeared in 1918 in Shanghai in the columns of the journal *Jianshe* (Reconstruction) founded by Sun Yatsen, Zhu Zhixin, and other bourgeois democrats.

In the first part of his book Sun Yatsen presented a philosophical theory ('it is difficult to know a thing, but easy to carry it out') directed against the traditional feudal doctrine that doomed the masses to inaction owing to the 'difficulty of action'. Sun's outlook was dualistic, a combination of elements of spontaneous materialism and dialectics with idealism and metaphysics. His pattern of thought contained some progressive ideas—that truth was knowable, that the world and society could be changed through the application of human effort, that revolutionary theory was the active guide to revolutionary action, and, to a point, criticism of Malthusianism and 'social Darwinism' (though, on the whole, Sun was not free from the influence of positivism and the theory of evolution). In the profusion of imperialist, feudal, conservative, and liberal ideologies that prevailed in China at the time, Sun Yatsen's views were an unqualified step forward.

In the second part of his book, 'Material Reconstruction', seeing the relatively rapid growth of national capital in the years of the imperialist world war, Sun Yatsen envisaged further rapid growth of industry and transport. His progressive approach to industrial development, however, was offset by the absence of any specific solution to the agrarian problem and any plan of picking up agriculture. Yet lacking this there was little hope of succeeding in industrialisation and economic advance. Influenced by Wilson's doctrine, Sun thought of taking China to an 'improved' capitalism—of a state-monopolistic complexion and availing itself of the foreign capital that had become disposable following the conclusion of the world war.

Sun's programme contained no clear-cut social demands to improve the livelihood of workers, peasants, and other toilers. But its main deficiency was lack of insight in the practical tasks of the struggle

for democratic power hand in hand with the broad mass of the people.

The third part of Sun's capital work was entitled 'Social Reconstruction' or 'A Primer of Democracy', in which he propagated elementary bourgeois democratic rights. A large section of the book was devoted to a popular exposition of the forms and structures of bourgeois constitutional, legal, and public institutions. And in the environment of arbitrary rule and abuse practised by warlords, bureaucrats, and feudalists, it certainly filled a practical need.

Lack of a conclusive programme of anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation—one closely tied up with the task of combating feudal relations and warlordism, and securing the country's democratic reconstruction—was a fault that depreciated Sun Yatsen's thinking of that period. Sun confined himself to the objective of restoring the 1913 parliament and the republican provisional constitution of 1912. Furthermore, he had no political party to rely on in fighting for even this moderate programme.

Sun Yatsen's subsequent ideological progress, which saw him cast off many of his earlier mistakes, occurred in the next period of the Chinese revolution under the immediate impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia.

During the years of the world war, with patriotic sentiment running high against Japanese aggression and with the movement against monarchic restoration gathering momentum, a revolutionary democratic group, New Youth (*Xin qingnian*) forged to the lead in the fight for the country's national independence. Among its members were Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Yun Daiying, Wu Yu, Gao Yihan, Cai Yuanpei, and Lu Xin (from 1918 on). They fought ardently for New Culture, and were joined by some bourgeois liberals—Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong, etc.

New Culture became the basic aim advocated by the socio-political and cultural journal *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*), whose first issue came out under the masthead *Youth* (*Qingnian*) in September 1915 under the editorship of Chen Duxiu. From the autumn of 1916, when the journal was renamed *New Youth*, it won the allegiance of a brilliant array of intellectuals, including the popular educationalist and journalist Li Dazhao and student Yun Daiying. In due course, it gained tremendous influence over the minds of the progressive intelligentsia and student youth.

The fight for New Culture was a fight for science and democracy, that is, for modern natural science versus ignorance, superstition, and mysticism, and for rule of the people and for democratic freedoms against authoritarianism and autocracy. These aims were best formulated in a *New Youth* editorial in January 1919: 'To protect democracy one cannot but fight against Confucianism,

against its ethics and rites, against its concepts of honesty and virtue, against the old morality and old politics. To protect science one cannot but fight against religion and the old arts. The fight for democracy and science is inconceivable without struggle against the old, traditional school and against the old literature.'⁶

The New Culture movement took up the cudgels far outside the domain of culture. It was a movement for the country's bourgeois democratic reconstruction, for the bourgeois ideology of enlightenment, and against the feudal Confucian ideology and medieval superstitions. A vehement controversy raged over such basic problems as political change and the democratic rights of the people; superstitions, prejudices, Confucianism, and old dogma; ideological liberation of the people; freedom and development of the individual; reform of the Chinese language and promotion of a new literature; the new vision of the world and the scientific method of thought, and so on. The ideological battle was against exponents of the feudal landlord ideology, spokesmen of monarchist parties and warlord cliques, constitutionalists and the Research Group, devotees of the Buddhist and Taoist religions, and against Christian missionaries.

This ideological struggle was a progressive thing, and mirrored the spread of the bourgeois democratic outlook. The New Culture movement struck a telling blow at the pillars of the patriarchal feudal ideology, and furthered the development of revolutionary thinking and the revolutionary movement of the subsequent period of Chinese history.

Like their Western predecessors, however, the Chinese bourgeois enlighteners overestimated the significance of reason, ideology, and morality. They were unclear about the role in the reconstruction of society of the material economic factor. Though they criticised feudal society, they were not able to rise to the idea of revolutionary struggle as an indispensable condition in the fight to end feudal landlord exploitation. This explains why the movement had no economic programme.

Nor were the ardent appeals for democratic change backed up with a concrete programme of revolutionary struggle and concrete demands for human rights and freedoms, and for a better life for the people. Failing to see the decisive role of the masses, the New Culture leaders pinned their hopes on the 'new youth'—the intelligentsia and students. This explains the limited scale of the movement and the narrow class background of its participants.

As the New Culture movement developed, three basic groups, not yet entirely divided, appeared in it.

The left group—Li Dazhao, Yun Daiying, Lu Xin, and others, though still inclined to idealise bourgeois democracy, was opposed to some of its aspects. Its members had revised many sides of the

bourgeois rule of law, and called for the elimination not only of the monarchic system, but also of the bureaucratic authoritarian regime, and its replacement with a truly free and independent government of the people. They closely scrutinised and re-assessed the country's ancient cultural heritage, and attacked theology, mysticism, the patriarchal feudal ideology, culture, and morality. Li Dazhao debunked various decadent Western bourgeois ideas, fatalism, and the plans of monarchic restoration peddled by American legal advisers in China. He and his associates exposed the Japanese and other foreign aggressors, and called for the awakening of the people's national consciousness. Elements of materialism and a scientific method of thought were beginning to show themselves in the world outlook of this group. The ideas and actions of its members were imbued with sincere revolutionary faith and dedication.

The right-wing bourgeois liberal group, consisting of Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong, and others, portrayed the capitalist social system, and imperialist ideology and culture, as a model of democracy, freedom, and civilisation. Its members expounded unqualified political and spiritual imitation of the United States of America. They indiscriminately consigned the national and traditional culture and ideology of the Chinese to the garbage heap, and advocated pragmatism, cosmopolitanism, bourgeois reformism, and individualism.

Members of the intermediate group (Chen Duxiu, Gao Yihan, Wu Yu, Cai Yuanpei, and others) held that Western culture and ideology, and Western political institutions had retained the progressive essence they had had in the era of the bourgeois revolutions in France and other European countries in the 18th century, and failed to see that they had degenerated in the imperialist era. They thought the principles of the French revolution merited faithful, thorough imitation, and took the side of the Entente. They attacked patriarchal feudal ideology, feudal culture, feudal ethical commandments, and Confucianism. They spoke with hate and outrage against the outdated social and political system obtaining in the country, advocated democratic reconstruction on the Western model, and recommended assimilation of bourgeois culture and science. Their philosophy was saturated with formalism, eclecticism, and metaphysics. And to this intermediate group belonged the bulk of the followers of the New Culture movement.

The bourgeois educationalist New Culture movement was, on the whole, historically limited. Its members were blind to the essence of imperialism. They did not see its colonialist substance. They did not understand the reactionary nature of its political and public institutions, its culture and ideology. They, consequently, had no anti-imperialist platform, no platform of national liberation. They

were incapable of an independent, objective, critical judgement either of Western culture and ideology, or of Chinese culture, which despite its feudalist and conservative qualities also had democratic elements and traditions. The New Culture movement reposed, in fact, on the ideology of bourgeois democracy. But, to some extent at least, it fertilised the soil for the spread in China of Marxist-Leninist ideas in the next stage of the country's history.

Response to the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia

Though the imperialist and Chinese reactionary press went out of its way to conceal the truth about the revolutionary events in Russia from the mass of the Chinese people, word of the October Revolution and the initial steps of Soviet power reached the country relatively with no delay. Three days after Soviet power was proclaimed in Petrograd, that is, on 10 November 1917, the Shanghai newspaper *Minguo ribao*, published by followers of Sun Yatsen, carried these banner headlines: 'Sudden Major Political Overturn in Russia', 'Provisional Government Overthrown', 'Maximalists (i.e. the Bolsheviks—Author) Take the City', and 'New Government Makes Offer of Just Peace'. In a report from London, datelined 8 November, it said, among other things, that 'the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has set out to secure 1) immediate conclusion of a democratic peace, 2) abolition of large landed estates and transfer of the land to its tillers; 3) transfer of all power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and 4) convocation of a democratic constituent assembly'.⁷

On the following day, 11 November 1917, reports of the Socialist Revolution in Russia appeared in the large Shanghai bourgeois papers *Shibao* and *Shenbao*, and the Beijing paper *Chenzhongbao*.

On 15 November, the journal *Taipingyang* (Pacific), mouthpiece of the bourgeois intelligentsia, explained to its readers that following the February revolution in Russia that deposed the tsar there had been a diarchy, with the Soviets gradually gathering strength while the Provisional Government lost power. Under the influence of revolutionary agitation in the trenches, the journal said, soldiers refused to obey their officers. It also reported that the revolutionary movement was led by Lenin, leader of the 'extreme party'.

These reports and comments, laconic though they were, caused confusion in the reactionary camp, ferment among the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and a response, too, in the thick of the Chinese masses.

Reports that in Russia, for the first time, power was taken over by insurgent workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms, that this new power formulated a peace policy, gave bread to the people and land to the peasants, that it enacted an 8-hour working day, established workers' control at enterprises, granted women equal rights with men, proclaimed the right to self-determination of all peoples, and the democratic rights and freedoms of all working people—all this had a tremendous revolutionising effect on the Chinese people.

Reflecting the general sentiment of the forward-looking Chinese public, the democratic journal *Laodong* (Labour) wrote in April 1918: 'While for some years terrible slaughter has been going on in Europe, a stern revolution broke out suddenly in Russia, shaking up Heaven and Earth. This revolution has attracted the attention of all people on earth, who are greedily following all reports from that country, and analysing results. Government dignitaries and officials fear that the unrest will grow to menacing proportions and that they will not be able to hang on to their high offices and lucrative posts. Their apprehensions are shared by the big landlords and moneybags, who are in dread of communism because it may one day deprive them of their property acquired by deceit and plunder. They shake in their boots, for the events have taken a course they are unable to alter. But the under-privileged working people look with hope to the revolution and thirst for its early victory, which will make them free and happy.'⁸

A most lively reaction was evoked by Chinese press reports about the policy of peace of the Soviet government and about its fair attitude to oppressed nations and peoples on the principles of equality and mutual respect. On 8 November 1917, the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets acted on Lenin's recommendation and issued the Decree on Peace. On 28 November, the Council of People's Commissars in revolutionary Russia addressed to the belligerent nations, including China, a proposal to open peace negotiations. The Chinese government, obedient to the Entente countries, turned down the Soviet offer. More, on 27 December 1917, it prohibited export of foodstuffs to Russia. On 15 February 1918, the Chinese minister in Petrograd, along with diplomats of the allied and neutral countries, protested against the All-Russia Central Executive Committee's decree of 10 February annulling loans granted by tsarist Russia, although for China it meant release from a debt amounting to many millions.

On 15 November 1917, the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia was made public in Petrograd, followed on 20 November by the Address to All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East. In these documents, the young Soviet republic renounced unequal

treaties concluded by the tsarist government with 'Eastern Nations', and declared that secret agreements with other powers injuring the sovereign rights of Eastern nations were torn up. Within months of the October Revolution, the Soviet government entered into negotiations with the Chinese minister, Li Jingzhang, concerning a new basis of relations between the two countries, and the annulment of the 1896 treaty, the 1901 Beijing (Boxer) protocol, and the Russian accords with Japan concluded from 1907 to 1916. But coming under pressure of the foreign powers, the Chinese government broke off the negotiations. 'Suddenly the allies took the Beijing government by the throat,' it said in an appeal of the Council of People's Commissars of Revolutionary Russia to the People of China on 25 July 1919, 'showered gold on the Beijing mandarins and the Chinese press, and forced the Chinese government to break off all communications with the worker-peasant government of Russia.'

China's democratic movement had deep sympathy for the revolutionary foreign policy of the Soviet government, notably in relation to China—so radically different from that of tsarist Russia and the other imperialist powers. 'The new government of Russia,' wrote the *Minguo ribao* on 27 May 1918, 'has concentrated all its attention on ending the abuses of capitalist monopolies and officials. In the matter of colonies, it has come out forcefully, on the principle of non-interference, against the former autocratic government's policy of oppression, and is doing everything it can to make the peoples happy.'⁹

The paper went on to say: 'The autocracy that existed in Russia for many centuries has been overthrown by Lenin's government. A vast land is being embraced by a democratic system. Now, it is hard to carry through principles of aggression and usurpation. The Lenin government in Russia has grown strong because it is guided by the peaceful principles of non-interference. For China it is an example that merits imitation.'

Earlier, at the end of March 1918, obedient to the foreign powers, the Beijing government had recalled its minister from the Soviet Republic. With the approval of the U.S.A. and the Entente countries, the Japanese were urging Duan Qirui's government to send a Chinese expeditionary army to Siberia. They wanted China to be involved in the anti-Soviet intervention. On 25 May, the Japanese and Chinese governments exchanged notes concerning an immediate discussion of 'co-operation' by the armed forces of China and Japan. Against the will of the Chinese people, Duan's government concluded a number of military agreements with Japan on joint action against Soviet Russia in the Far East (a military agreement on 16 May 1918, a naval agreement on 19 May 1918, and so on).

Under these accords, the Chinese army and navy came under the control of the Japanese military command, which could use Chinese troops at its own discretion. On 24 August 1918, an official announcement was made that Chinese army units were being shipped to Siberia: China became a participant in the 14-power intervention against revolutionary Russia.

Patriotic forces in China were infuriated. They were vexed over Duan's policy and the reactionary agreements China had been made to sign with Japan. On 15 May 1918, Chinese students in Tokyo started a protest strike. A mass meeting decided that they should leave Japan and return home. More than 3,000 of them, who returned to China before the year was out, mounted a massive anti-imperialist and anti-militarist campaign in Shanghai, Beijing, and other cities. On 21 May, students of Beijing University, the Teachers College, the industrial and law institutes, and other higher schools in the capital went on strike against the Sino-Japanese military agreements, and joined returned students from Japan in a demonstration outside the seat of the government. The demonstrators protested against the aggressive military agreements, against China's participation in the anti-Soviet intervention, and against the Duan government's policy of national treason. They exposed the Japanese imperialists' lie of 'a Bolshevik threat to Asiatic nations', and called for friendly relations with Soviet Russia.

The students' action was supported by large sections of the Chinese people, giving rise to a new wave of patriotism, which sped the Duan government to its doom. Speaking to Japanese and Indian journalists in Shanghai in the spring of 1918, Sun Yatsen gave an exposition of the aspirations of the Chinese people. He was the first of China's public leaders to call for the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Asian states, and said the gains of the October Revolution deserved more complete coverage in the Asiatic press.

The Great October Socialist Revolution had made a strong impact on Sun's thinking. It stimulated his search of new roads to China's future. 'The revolution in Russia,' he said, 'has fired the hopes of all mankind.' In 1918, Sun sent a telegram to the Soviet government and Lenin in person, with congratulations on the victory of the revolution in Russia.

The telegram said, among other things: 'The revolutionary party of China has deep admiration for the hard struggle of the revolutionary party of your country, and hopes that the revolutionary parties of China and Russia will join hands for common struggle.' The telegram was published in the weekly *Zhengzhi zhoubao* (Politics) in Shanghai.¹⁰

The new surge of the anti-Japanese movement in China upset the plans of the Japanese imperialists. The Chinese troops sent to Siberia

refused to go into action against the Red Army and Red partisans. In 1918, Lenin pointed out that Japanese efforts to advance into Russia are being held down, first of all, by the danger of insurgency in China.¹¹

Despite the hostility of the Beijing government, the Soviet Republic again, on 5 July 1918, publicly renounced all treaties, agreements, and loans once imposed on China by the tsarist government. This aroused strong feelings of friendship for the young Russian worker-peasant state among the plain people of China. More than 40,000 Chinese coolies, of those who had come to Russia before the Revolution in search of a livelihood, fought shoulder to shoulder with their Soviet brothers in the civil war and foreign intervention to safeguard the gains of the Socialist Revolution. Those who later returned to China passed on word of the history-making events in Russia to the Chinese workers. Friendship ripened between the two great nations.

The best minds in China saw the historical relevance of the October Revolution for China's future and, for that matter, for the future of all countries. Among those who saw that the example of revolutionary Russia was far more reliable than that of the French revolution of 1789 was Li Dazhao. In the article, 'The French and the Russian Revolutions Compared' (July 1918), he noted the basic distinction between them: 'While the French revolution was a revolution of the 18th century based on the principle of nationalism, the October Revolution in Russia is a revolution of the early 20th century based on the principle of socialism and is of a social and internationalist nature. The Russian revolution is a clear sign of the profound change in the ideology not only of the Russians, but also of all the people of our time.'

Li amplified: 'The gigantic change in the world civilisation of the 20th century takes its beginnings from the storm of the Russian revolution.' There is also the following passage in Li's article: 'We must welcome the events in Russia, and consider them the dawn of a new world civilisation. We must attentively follow the events in the new Russia that is being erected upon a foundation of freedom and humanism. All that will help us keep step with the new world tendencies.'¹²

Russia's revolutionary withdrawal from the war, fraternisation in the trenches, and the demoralisation of the German troops betokened an early end to the slaughter in Europe. China waited impatiently for the war to be over. Most Chinese thought this would bring their country, as it would the whole world, a radiant hope of peace and independence.

Spurred by the October Revolution and the armistice in Europe, a sharp polemic erupted over the road China should follow—the Russian

or the Western? A large segment of the Chinese intelligentsia misled by the demagogic promises of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and by his ill-reputed Fourteen Points, as well as by his pronouncement that all colonial disputes must be settled freely, sincerely, and absolutely impartially, pinned their hopes on the United States and the Entente countries, and expected China, which had fought in the war on their side, to be treated as an equal by the victor-states at the Peace Conference. News of the armistice signed at Compiègne threw the Chinese into tumultuous jubilation. Fired by patriotic feelings, revellers tore down the monument of Baron Ketteler, the German minister killed during the Boxer uprising, which had been put up in Beijing on Germany's demand in the imperial days. Demonstrations and torch processions celebrating the allied victory went on night and day. Mass meetings were held in the park outside Tiananmen Gate in Beijing on 15, 16, and 17 November 1918. At the first meeting, the crowd was addressed by Cai Yuanpei, rector of Beijing University, revered scholar and teacher, prominent political leader, and participant in the anti-Qing revolutionary movement. He portrayed the Entente as a bearer of democracy and freedom, and victor in a just war against an iniquitous Kaiser Germany. He called on China to support the Entente, and lauded the Wilson doctrine.

At the meeting on 16 November, Cai took up where he had left off the day before. He maintained that having sent 150,000 coolies to France to help in the war effort, the Chinese had done their bit and were entitled to expect fair treatment. Another speaker at the meeting, Hu Shi, attributed extraordinary merits to the United States. The defeat of Germany, as he saw it, was achieved less by force of arms than by the wise policy of President Wilson. The founding of the League of Nations and the subordination to it of the armed forces of all countries, he held, would put an end to wars and establish eternal peace on earth. Hu Shi called on China to follow the road charted by the U.S. President.

Tao Menghe, another prominent scholar and public leader who spoke at the meeting, listed among the political lessons of the war the need to avoid secret diplomacy, to avoid violations of law, to avoid interference of the military in politics, and to avoid dictatorship. As he saw it, elimination of the four evils would avert further wars.

In his articles about the lessons of the war, Chen Duxiu held that the victory over Germany was secured not by the Entente alone, but also by the German Social-Democrats, who had worked for the revolutionary overthrow of the Kaiser and the militarists. This did not prevent him, however, from extolling Wilson's Fourteen Points, which he described as a model of justice and a proper foundation for relations among people and among states.

Li Dazhao, on the other hand, had an entirely different view of the lessons of the world war and the significance of the Russian revolution. Speaking at the mass meeting at Tiananmen Gate on 16 November 1918, and in his articles, he said the winners in the war were not the Entente countries and not Wilson with his doctrine, not the militarists of the countries concerned, but the mass of the people and the Russian Bolsheviks. Li described the First World War as an imperialist and predatory war which had far-reaching political and social consequences. He pointed out that it had led to social revolutions in Russia and Germany, to the defeat of militarism, capitalism, and other isms, and to the victory of the masses, whose joint anti-war actions in various countries had hastened the end of the world war. The credit for stopping the slaughter, he stressed, was due not to Wilson and his like, but to Marx, Lenin, Liebknecht, and other revolutionaries. For this reason, he concluded, the day that brought the great changes into the world—the 7th of November 1917—should be 'a holiday of the new era of all mankind'.¹³ Li held that the revolution in Russia had ushered in new times, heralding the world revolution of the 20th century, and that the only possible road to follow in emancipating the Chinese people and regenerating China was the Russian road. Learn from the Bolsheviks their revolutionary theory and practice, he urged. He exposed the slander heaped on the October Revolution by bourgeois propaganda, and admonished pessimists and grumblers. He explained that the birth of the new era, like the birth of a man, was beset by difficulties and dangers, and that the new era should be welcomed, that people should have faith in its inevitable victory. 'The revolution in Russia,' he wrote, 'is but the first fallen leaf warning the old world of the approach of autumn.'

Li interpreted the term 'Bolshevism', which reactionaries called 'extremism', to mean 'revolutionary socialism'. The Bolsheviks, he wrote, 'follow the German socialist economist Marx as the founder of their doctrine'. He added: 'Their aim is to destroy ... the system of production in which profit is monopolised by the capitalist.'¹⁴ The Bolsheviks were against the slogan of defending the bourgeois fatherland and proclaimed that 'the war is a war of the Tsar, of the Kaiser, of kings and emperors, that it is a war of capitalist governments, but it is not their war. Theirs is the war of classes, a war of all the world's proletariat and common people against the capitalists of the world. Its victory will give work to all men and women, and weld the toilers and their government. All enterprises will belong to those who work in them, and aside from this there will be no other possessions. The Bolsheviks will unite the proletariat of the world, and create global freedom.'¹⁵

Li Dazhao saw the Russian way as a model for revolutions in

other countries, including China. He wrote: 'Such mighty rolling tides are indeed beyond the power of the present capitalist governments to prevent or stop, for the mass movement of the 20th century combines the whole of mankind into one great mass.... In the course of such a world mass movement, all those dregs of history which can impede the progress of the new movement—such as emperors, nobles, warlords, bureaucrats, militarists, capitalists—will certainly be destroyed as though struck by a thunderbolt. Encountering this irresistible tide, these things will be swept away one by one.' With deep emotion, Li referred to the triumph of Bolshevism, auguring the advent of a new era: 'Henceforth, all that one sees around him will be the triumphant banner of Bolshevism, and all that one hears around him will be Bolshevism's song of victory. The bell is rung for humanitarianism.... See the world of tomorrow; it assuredly will belong to the red flag.'¹⁶

Li called on the people of China to be unsparing of their strength and use the rays of light that came from the October Revolution, which 'as a bright star in the dead of night illumines the road of new mankind'. He fixed his gaze on the future. 'We must use this light, and strive forward persistently for the good of mankind,' he wrote. 'Man must constantly aspire to the highest ideals, and in his constant movement discover the new, sweeping away all the old and decayed.'¹⁷

At that time, Li Dazhao had not yet fully apprehended the historical international significance of the revolution in Russia. But his revolutionary instinct led him to feel and believe that the road taken by the Russian working class, the road of revolution, was the only road that would lead the Chinese people to liberation.

Li was disappointed in the Chinese bourgeoisie and intelligentsia; he felt that they were not grown to the great mission of liberating China. He looked for the source of revolutionary energy in the mass of the people. He studied the life of the Beijing workers, the servants, the rickshaw coolies of Shanghai, the miners of Tangshan, and the peasants of various provinces. He attached special significance to workers' strikes, and deplored the poor organisation of the strike at the Tangshan coalmines. He felt workers needed education and enlightenment, and called for the manufacture of popular, easily comprehensible teaching aids for them.

The more radical, revolutionary-spirited youth and intellectuals flocked to Li Dazhao's side. In July 1918, Li became one of the moving spirits who organised the Young China Science Society (Shaonian zhongguo). Among its members were nationalists, anarchists, and 'socialists' of diverse shades, but also representatives of the advanced revolutionary youth, such as Cai Hesen, Yun Daiying, Deng Zhongxia, and Zhao Shiyan, who in due course developed into

prominent revolutionaries and Communists.

Li took part in launching the patriotic Students Union journal *Guomin* (The People). Along with other members of the journal's editorial board, he conducted debates on the 'Asiatic', 'Shandong', and other issues, and exposed Japanese designs in China. Li promoted the publication in the journal *Xinchao* (New Current) of a series of articles about the revolution in Russia, progressive works of fiction, such as Lu Xin's fine short story, *Tomorrow*, and some writings of Ye Shengtao.

In December 1918, the weekly *Meizhou pinglun*, another revolutionary periodical, was started on Li Dazhao's initiative, affording Li and his followers one more medium for exposing the slander heaped on Soviet Russia and communism by the bourgeois press. Like other progressive periodicals, it published translations of the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the decrees on land and peace, the labour and matrimonial laws, the decrees on the equality of women and on the nationalisation of banks, and various other documents of the Soviet government, an abridged translation of the *Communist Manifesto*, and excerpts from Frederick Engels's book *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

The journal *Xin Qingnian* had a special column, 'Studies of Soviet Russia', running articles, reports, and translations. The progressive papers and journals also gave coverage to the revolutionary movement in European lands, and in the rest of the Orient.

As a result, already on the threshold of the May Fourth events of 1919, that mammoth anti-imperialist and anti-feudal action of the Chinese people, Li Dazhao was a recognised leader of a revolutionary group of intellectuals whose influence in the country was steadily rising. Subsequently, the group became the nucleus of China's communist intelligentsia. Ranged alongside, in the front line of the struggle, stood Lu Xin, the eminent democrat and revolutionary writer. He hailed the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia as the dawning of a new era. In 1918, in his piece entitled *The Holy War*, he wrote that the people of China must raise their faces to the sunrise that lit up the sky above their heads.

By propagating the ideas of the October Revolution and the 'Russian way', the foremost Chinese revolutionary intelligentsia fertilised the ground for the later spread of Marxism-Leninism in their country. Though various groups of intellectuals in the New Culture movement disagreed over the road China should take, they maintained a tenuous unity of action in face of the old feudal ideology and Japanese aggression, and single-mindedly opposed surrender to foreign powers, and the reactionary home policy of the warlords. They stood together, too, defying the imperialist deal

struck at China's expense at the Peace Conference in Versailles in January 1919. The resolutions adopted by the victor-powers gave rise to an outburst of fury in China. This grew over into the powerful May Fourth (1919) movement, which it will be only right to describe as the Chinese response to imperialist piracy and, indeed, also a direct consequence of the revolutionising influence of Russia's October Revolution.

Chapter 18

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE XINHAİ REVOLUTION AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

When China entered the First World War it had just emerged from the bourgeois Xinhai revolution of 1911-1913, and, of course, experienced its beneficial consequences. From mid-1915 on, these consequences intertwined with the unique, never again experienced, economic boom generated by the war. Their cumulative effect, indeed, shaped the social-economic and inner-political climate of those years.

The benefits of the revolution could not come into their own in full measure in the first few years after that portentous event. Many came to the surface very gradually, and their impact was from time to time obscured or overshadowed by fresh political developments—the world war, the May Fourth movement, the revolution of 1925-1927, and so on. Still, both the immediate here-and-now political results of the Xinhai revolution, and its more profound social-economic consequences were in evidence already at the time of the world war.

The revolution had put an end to the remnants of the national oppression of the Chinese by the Manchu conquerors. It had demolished the despotic medieval regime of the Qing dynasty. It had abolished monarchy and established a republic, the first in Asia. The superior estate of 'bannermen' (*qiren*) was abolished, as was the power of the Manchu nobility. Manchu courtiers and generals no longer received monetary stipends from the treasury, which had run to a large sum, and were stripped of that part of their landed property that came under the head of crown land. The republican government granted freedom to serfs and slaves on the former estates of the emperor, the Qing nobility, and various imperial boards. It put up for sale a considerable portion of the land of the deposed dynasty and the imperial treasury, including the 'banner' land and land of military colonists. The remaining restrictions on landownership and Chinese colonisation were swept away in Manchuria.

The social and economic upheaval of the turn of the century had eroded the pillars of the medieval pyramid of specifically Chinese estates (*shi*, *nong*, *gong*, and *shang*), that is, *shenshi*, tillers, artisans, and merchants. The revolution completed this process, relieving Chinese society of the curbs and trammels of the estates system. The influence of the *shenshi* plummeted owing to the rapid rise of a modern intelligentsia, and the post-revolution advancement of the military. Part of the former *shi* estate itself came under the effects of *embourgeoisement*. In the big cities, former notions lost their grip on people's minds under the effects of urbanisation and the growth of capitalism. Upon the quickly disappearing estates there rose new social forces—the bourgeoisie, proletariat, and modern intelligentsia.

The Xinhai revolution undermined the former pillars of feudal common, and partly codified, law, strongly spurring positive changes in the countryside. The overthrow of the traditional monarchic regime set in motion a gradual erosion of some old patterns, clan regulations, family privileges, and restrictions on the sale and purchase of land. They were no longer honoured by the courts and by the laws of the republic. From 1913 on, the Supreme Court of the Republic of China no longer acknowledged any such encroachments on proprietary rights, which it saw as an obstacle to economic development. This gave momentum to the further conversion of land into a commodity and the gradual emergence of the institution of bourgeois landownership. Land belonging to temples and monasteries, 'common' and 'school' land, like the possessions of clans and of rural 'joss' houses, turned into private property. The traditional right of redeeming sold land, too, was slowly but surely dying. The rulings and explications of the Supreme Court in 1915-1919 denied nearly all support to this medieval practice, and it gradually went out of use. The gradual elimination of patriarchal rules occurred not only from 'above', through republican legislation, but also from 'below', spontaneously, through the everyday practice of land deals, and at once affected the nature of the relationship between landlord and peasant.

The *shenshi* and some landlords received the downfall of the monarchic system as partial deliverance from the restraints of local tradition, of common law and the standards of Confucian ethics in their relation to tenant farmers. In some ways, this was linked to the collapse of the system of estates and, therefore, to the erosion of the rules of *shenshi* behaviour. The change in their status gave them a freer hand as it were. In the new setting, some *shenshi* sought to make up for the loss of their former privileges with commercial gain and the profit of enterprise, as well as with more intensive exploitation of tenants, debtors, and other clients. Most *shenshi* threw off the mask of 'noble', 'truly wise' men, and stood before the leaseholder as unmerciful exploiters lusting for more and more profit. Some

shenshi, once revered in their villages as 'champions' of the peasantry or simply as men who followed 'just' customs and never exceeded conventional rent rates, began to depart from these standards, turning into what were known as 'evil *shenshi*' (*lieshen*). Previously, the peasants confined their dislike to officials and lawless 'local despots' (*tuba*, *tuhao*); now the *lieshen* were viewed with the same aversion as the *tuhao*.

Besides, two new elements entered the peasants' attitude to the *shenshi*. First, the prestige of the *shenshi* was seriously undermined by the collapse of the monarchy and of the emperor as the hierarch of the system of officials and *shenshi*. Second, with the loosening of central power following the revolution and the resultant provincial regionalism, the *shenshi*'s essence of exploiters stood out in bolder relief. Local *shenshi* wormed themselves into key posts in the county and district administrations that were once held by officials from Beijing or other provinces. As a result, the involvement of the 'noble and wise' in the violence visited on peasants—the collection of taxes, and various punitive functions—became more direct and more visible. The former 'neutrality' of the *shenshi* vis-à-vis the treasury and the villagers decreased.

A partial 'renewal' of the landlord element occurred on another plane as well. The old style rent receivers, poorly adapted to the changed conditions, which, among other things, meant the market economy, were in decline. A new type of landlord was on the rise—from among the militarists, officials, compradores, merchants, and entrepreneurs. These landlords were in many cases newcomers to the village, district or county, and were less deferential to local customs, traditions, and clan obligations. They were therefore more easily swayed to break the former patterns of 'justice', especially in matters of land lease.

Concurrently, with the peasant movement growing apace, notably after the revolution, *shenshi* and other landlord elements began moving from the 'unsafe' village to the 'safer' town. This disrupted their rural ties, and relieved them of the obligation of abiding by local standards of behaviour and traditions. And absentee landlords went more readily against the former customs and norms. All they required of their agent was more money—in rent and paid debts.

Before the Xinhai revolution, the peasants' standard of living was affected chiefly by tighter taxation, while the rent was relatively stable. After the collapse of the old regime, the traditional rights of lease holders were gradually trimmed away, and rents began to rise. The main reason was the fluctuations on the market, and the scramble of landlords for greater masses of commodities and greater commercial profit. Land was being leased for excessively high deposits. More extensively, rent was collected in advance, before the harvest.

For both these reasons, tenants became more dependent on money-lenders, because they needed more cash than they had. Rent in cash visibly edged out labour rent.

The patriarchal relationship between the landlord and his tenant was crumbling. Custom ceased to be its regulator. The practice of written contracts replaced oral deals. Before the revolution, custom and Qing law affirmed the right of the dutiful leaseholder, one who had no arrears, to automatic renewal of the lease; now, this right was more loosely protected, and gradually became a fiction. Even in controversial cases, republican legislation spurned old customs and gave preference to the proprietor's right of making the most of the situation on the market. This granted the landlord freedom to evict the former leaseholder and harden the terms of tenure. To be sure, in most cases such change of tenants could yield no additional profit, because the *shenshi* or *tuhao* had already been exploiting the leaseholder to the maximum possible limit. Besides, after the 1911-1913 revolution, landlords had increasingly begun to ignore the old custom of inspecting fields before harvesting jointly with the tenant to see where the crop had failed, for it was provided that contracted payments for these fields would be either reduced or totally waived. Now, landlords refused to inspect the fields, and greatly decreased their rebates to tenants.

Common law was flouted in the case of the ordinary—long-term or indefinite—leaseholding, but this was, indeed, also accompanied by a gradually building up offensive on the institution of tenure in perpetuity—the most privileged and most favourable type of lease for the peasants. True, it could not be abolished legislatively, first, because this was not always in the landowner's interests, and, second, because it would generate massive peasant unrest in Central and South China. The legislators of the republic, and the landowners themselves, set out, therefore, to gradually bring 'tenure in perpetuity' down to the lower forms of tenancy. What mattered most was not that fewer peasants benefited from the institution of tenure in perpetuity, but that it was twisted beyond recognition. Its former content (irrevocable contract, unchangeable price, special farming rights) was gradually emasculated. The landlord gained the opportunity to raise the agreed tariff, to introduce various new restrictions, and, what was more, to take away the land. The highly privileged tenure in perpetuity was reduced to the level of an ordinary movable leaseholding. The main purpose of the *shenshi*, *tuhao* and *dizhu* was not, in fact, to evict and replace the lessee. All they wanted was to augment their rights to the land and to toughen the terms of the contract, because the right of tenure in perpetuity was a hindrance to selling the lot of land in question, and, indeed, to raising the rent to fit the prevailing market price, the

crop yield, change of crop, and so on.

In 1914, the Supreme Court ruled that tenure in perpetuity could be revoked (if the lessee was in arrears) or the rent raised (if the market price changed considerably). In 1915, the landlord's right to raise the payments of the lessee to fit market fluctuations was confirmed. The complaints of village societies (*nonghui*) against this revision of tenure in perpetuity show that the assault on peasant rights came not only from 'above' (Beijing), but also from 'below', from local authorities. Formerly, the leaseholder in perpetuity was relieved of a year's rent in the event of crop failure, and paid only a part of it in the event of a lean harvest. In 1921, elaborating on this practice, the Supreme Court confirmed the right of landlords to take the land away from the 'leaseholder in perpetuity' if he was more than two years in arrears or had once 'deliberately' withheld payment. The landlord was also allowed to evict a dutiful 'leaseholder in perpetuity' if, as owner of the land, he wished to work the land himself or had some other motive. All these rulings were especially favourable for the *shenshi* and *tuhao*. The tenure in perpetuity was gradually stripped of its former advantages, was hemmed in by all sorts of restrictions on the part of the landlord, and increasingly reduced to a lease at will on inferior terms, with the landlord being able to cancel the contract at any time. Short-term lease-holdings, that is, for a year only, and with the landlord keeping all his rights, became widespread.

In sum, the landlords were the ones who gained from the revolution. They were the true beneficiaries of the initiated moderate 'agrarian renovation', though they, too, and the *shenshi* more than others, suffered some injury, chiefly through loss of estate privileges and of prestige. The peasants benefited much less. Tenant farmers were, indeed, quick to feel that the change went against their interests and was in favour of the landlord, that the modernisation that was getting under way was robbing them of the traditional protective rights, customs, and institutions. This explains the paradox why the post-revolution progress seen in agrarian relations was welcomed and supported by landlords, while the peasantry took a conservative stand and championed old, traditional patterns. As a result, instead of opposing feudalism, which they would be expected to do, peasants campaigned for the faithful observance of its 'just' social-economic norms, including common law.

All in all, however, the 1911-1913 revolution failed to clear agriculture of feudal standards. It did stimulate bourgeois tendencies a little, it is true, and this not simply spontaneously, from 'below', but also through deliberate action by the government, from 'above'. The elements of modernisation were exploited by the landlords to adapt old terms of tenure to the new situation. As a result, transition-

al phenomena of those years were more in the nature of a defensive reaction, a means of ensuring the survival of traditional forms, rather than tangible steps toward capitalistic patterns. This spoke of the great stability and the great regenerative potential of the old structure. The adjustments in the sphere of land law, the 'updating' of land tenure, and the partial transformation of the *shenshi* were more of a renovation of Chinese feudalism than an act of 'de-feudalisation'. In effect, the result was the worst kind of conservative model of land use, with most benefits accruing to the capitalistic landlord.

The peasantry was essentially deprived of the protection of feudal common law, and got nothing substantial in return. More, the initiated modernisation of Chinese society was, in the final analysis, to be paid for by the peasantry, and without any hope of being compensated for what it lost in the process. Ultimately, the establishment of the republic was in practical terms directed against the interests of the peasant population. In that sense, the Xinhai revolution may be described as a kind of 'anti-peasant revolution', which set in motion those segments of the peasantry that had previously been in a state of relative immobility. While the post-Boxer 'fiscal explosion' had provoked landowning peasants to go into the struggle against the established authority, the post-Xinhai land law 'renovation' did the same in the case of tenant farmers. And by the early 1920s the two streams of discontent appeared to converge. Now, nearly all peasants had risen to protect their rights. The moderate bourgeois revolution of 1911-1913, conceived least of all as a radical solution of the agrarian question, paved the way for an 'agrarian revolution', the likeness of a new peasant war. This as yet only incipient situation acted as a contributing factor that later brought on the revolution of 1925-1927.

We are here dealing with 'agrarian renovation' in only the limited time span between 1913 and 1919, that is, in its initial stage. Yet these seven years were enough for the peasantry to see that the chosen model of modernisation was primarily directed against the traditional rights of peasants, and that the new pattern was worse than the old. The peasants wanted a return to the former 'justice'. A new peasant movement was on the rise. Peasant unions appeared on the scene to take up the fight.

In the course of the 'agrarian renovation', the profit motive stripped of Confucian ethical standards was coming to replace the one-time pattern of 'justice'. Cash cropping was increasingly edging out all other modes of farming. This was affecting the terms of land tenure. The new trends hastened the *embourgeoisement* of part of the *shenshi* and landlords, and naturally also stimulated growth of capitalistic elements among the peasants. Hence, though the Xinhai revolution was essentially an urban upheaval, its effects on the agrar-

ian population was also, as we see, fairly substantial. But the impact of the world war, of the wartime economic boom, was much less felt in the countryside than in the town.

The bourgeois revolution and its results largely determined the subsequent political and ideological mood of the more mobile social forces of Chinese society, though its influence on different strata was far from the same. The bloc of wealthy landowners—*shenshi* and local officials—received the revolution with mixed feelings. They were pleased that it was a moderate revolution, and especially pleased that the agrarian question had not figured on the order of the day. But they were also frightened because the revolution had rocked the boat and given impetus to the peasant movement. They wanted 'peace and order'. On the extreme right wing, they even sought, though without results, to restore the monarchy. This led to an abrupt turn to reactionary political and ideological concepts among them, among the closely related 'old' intelligentsia, and also among the bourgeois elite. The reaction was typical. For the propertied class was shaken by the rise of the democratic movement of the masses, and naturally feared that society would keep on 'waking up'. The big bourgeoisie and the bourgeois landlords had meanwhile attained their immediate political aims with the establishment of the republic, and were appeased. The favourable wartime market was drawing the attention of the bourgeois elements away from the political sphere to the economic.

The Chinese bourgeoisie had failed to capture hegemony in the revolution. It had been no more than a faction in it, a weak and secondary faction of the *shenshi*-landlord-bourgeois anti-Manchu movement, and had not gained any visible hold on power. Power fell into the hands of the Beiyang bloc of officials, militarists, large landowners, and rightist politicians, supported, too, by the bourgeois elite. The moderation of the Xinhai revolution and the conservatism of the new administration was, by and large, consonant with the level of development of the *shenshi*-bourgeois bloc and with its political outlook. The Beiyang regime was least of all concerned with the interests and aspirations of the lower, 'massive', sections of the bourgeoisie. These latter, too, like the elite of entrepreneurs, yearned for peace and order to be restored, and for a pro-bourgeois economic policy that would actively encourage national enterprise.

The most acute of all questions for the Chinese bourgeoisie was how to face up to foreign imperialism and foreign capital. Some factions of the bourgeois elite, primarily the compradores and returned Chinese, looked with fawning respect upon the capitalist West, which was for them a model and a possible ally. The *shenshi* and the officialdom, on the other hand, took a guarded view of the foreign powers. The outlook of the big merchants and usurers was

still less pro-Western. And capitalists in the category of medium and small national enterprise, to say nothing of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, were belligerently anti-foreign. On the whole, the bourgeoisie expected the republican authorities to protect the Chinese market from foreign expansion, and to buttress the country's national sovereignty. Yet the Beiyang clique was powerless for it depended on the imperialist powers in still greater measure than even the Qing regime. And their dependence kept growing, adding to the alienation of the bourgeois strata and to the hostility of the mass of the people.

The material condition of factory and other workers had remained practically the same as before the Xinhai revolution. Neither had the revolution given anything to the petty bourgeoisie in town and country—the artisans, craftsmen, and small traders. The situation of the bulk of the population, the peasantry, was clearly deteriorating, aggravated on its downward course by the abuses of local warlords—military extortions, duties, impositions, the calamities brought about by the endless feuds between hostile cliques, and primarily the civil war between North and South in 1917 and 1918.

The petty bourgeoisie, both urban and rural, was disgusted with the state of affairs. The ranks of the democratic movement kept swelling. The bourgeois revolutionaries, indignant over the inability of the Beiyang regime to safeguard China's national interests, were winning followers.

The historical potential and the objectives of the revolution of 1911-1913 had been strictly limited. The agrarian question and the question of flinging off the imperialist yoke, for example, had not even occurred on its agenda. Still, it did carry out the more necessary and crying tasks that history had set before it, thus accelerating the rate of development of Chinese society in the basic social-economic, politico-ideological, and cultural spheres. The downfall of the Qing monarchy had eliminated the most archaic of the obstacles to China's modernisation and to the growth of national capitalism.

The entrepreneurs associated their cherished hopes of a more favourable economic policy with the overthrow of the old regime. The bourgeoisie and the *shenshi* entrepreneurs were jubilant, among other things, that from 1914 on the republican government had three members of the bourgeois elite in the cabinet—the banker Liang Shiyi, and the millionaire industrialists Zhou Xuesi and Zhang Jian. The latter two were minister of finance and minister of agriculture and commerce respectively. Zhang Jian proclaimed a 'cotton and iron' policy, promising to encourage national enterprise. The business world applauded when Yuan Shikai, China's new potentate, promised to allocate 20 million *yuan* from the treasury for the promotion of national industry. Many other promises were made, and senior

officials did, indeed, go through the motions of aiding private enterprise—their every step on this plane being widely advertised. But matters never reached the point of radical change in fiscal and foreign trade policy. Still, the bourgeoisie conceived the establishment of the republic as an act that would eventually open new horizons for the growth of national capitalism. Various unions, societies, and associations were formed with the aim of promoting industry and trade.

In mid-1915 there began an unusually favourable period of economic activity, created by the world war. The big bourgeoisie and the lower, 'massive', section of entrepreneurs extracted great advantages from the generous years of 1915-1919. They had failed to achieve all their aims in the political field, and strained to make up for it in the commercial sphere. They became more active, and in some ways consolidated their ranks. The effects of the world war on China, at least over four or five years, made amends for the prosperity which the bourgeoisie had expected to spring from the Xinhai revolution and which the Beiyang government promised them but was unable to give. All the same, in China the years of the war passed under the mark of that bourgeois revolution. Without its effects and influence, Chinese entrepreneurs and bourgeois *shenshi* could not have benefited so effectively from the highly favourable economic situation of 1915-1919 which, in turn, raised the hopes and the highly enterprising post-revolutionary mood of the business world for a number of years.

The revolution of 1911-1913 did not liberate China from imperialist dependence. Nor had this been its aim. On the contrary, foreign banks won still greater influence in those years by gaining control over the salt tax and by saddling China with more loans, including the biggest one of the lot known as the reconstruction loan of 1913. The terms of some old railway loans, too, were revised and made tougher. And new railway loans were granted on more onerous terms. Indeed, the time between the Xinhai revolution and the outbreak of the world war became the second phase of the big imperialist scramble for railway concessions, the first one having taken place in 1896-1898. From July 1912 to May 1914, the powers managed to saddle the Republic of China with thirteen railway loans and advance payments. This came as a cold shower for the Chinese bourgeoisie and bourgeois landlords, who were counting on independent national railway construction that had been the slogan of the broad patriotic movement on the eve of the revolution. But the Beiyang government had not the backbone to initiate a protectionist policy and safeguard national economic interests.

What the Xinhai revolution failed to bring, the world war yielded in full measure. Where the revolution had proved unable to protect

the Chinese market from the encroachments of the foreign powers, the world war interrupted the process of consolidation of the foreign sector, and put the brakes on the business activity of European capital in China, visibly changing the economic balance among the powers. Britain, France, and tsarist Russia, preoccupied with the war in Europe, relaxed their expansionist pressure on China. Germany's positions were, to all intents and purposes, reduced to nought. The condition of the national bourgeoisie changed abruptly. In the setting of commodity shortages, it entered a 'golden age', a 'glorious period' of relatively independent development. The downturn in foreign competition on China's home market stimulated various forms of capitalism in industry and in urban and rural artisan manufacturing. The demand for Chinese commodities and raw materials went up at home and in the world market—in Europe, Japan, and the United States.

In Europe, the world war had caused civilian production to decline. European exports to Asian countries, including colonies, went down. This energised Chinese exports and growth of Chinese industries. The reduced export of British cotton goods and yarn to the Pacific pushed up the demand for Chinese fabrics and yarn in South-East Asia, encouraging construction of textile mills in China. Between 1910 and 1920, exports of cotton goods from China went up more than 100 per cent. The structure of Chinese exports changed visibly, new items appearing on the list. Factory-made production—ready-made and semi-finished goods—figured more prominently among the commodities exported from China. Coal and ore—manually and, especially, mechanically mined—were shipped out on a much larger scale than ever before. This introduced changes in the structure of Chinese imports, among which machines and instruments now stood much higher on the list.

But there were also adverse effects of the war that hindered the growth of national capitalism. The main adverse factor was the shortage of machines, instruments and, especially, engines, which compelled Chinese industrialists to be content with more modest, smaller projects.

On the whole, however, the export opportunities and the foreign market played a secondary role in the economic boom of 1915-1919. It was the expansion of the domestic market that chiefly spurred China's industrial growth.

The time of the world war and the two years that followed it played a special role in the history of China's machine industry. Never before had the modern capitalist economic structures had so long a spell (five to six years) of favourable, 'hothouse' conditions in which to develop in China. Factories and mines grew in number. The results of 1915-1919, and partly of 1920, by far eclipsed those of

1895-1898, and those of the 'restoration of rights' movement of 1905-1908 which had, in effect, nurtured the priorly feeble Chinese bourgeoisie.

From 1912 to 1916 registered steam and diesel engines and electric motors nearly tripled in number, and their capacity went up nearly five times over. From 1913 to 1920, national capital built 675 new enterprises in 23 consumer industries. Industrial capitalism also greatly fortified its positions in mining, especially coal mining, for the effects of the war had pushed up the price of fuel. The number of coalmines worked by Chinese capital doubled from 1913 to 1919.

Literature dating to those years is full of cheerful references to the sometimes very high profitability of machine-made goods, even of goods made manually—this especially in 1915-1917, and in some industries also in 1918 and 1919. Raw materials and ready products were in high demand, sales rose to dizzy heights. The market was good, and profits on invested capital rose and rose. The growth of national factory enterprise led eventually to an unheard-of wartime boom which some describe as an 'industrial revolution' and which dwarfed the spirit of enterprise that had reigned in 1905-1908. All in all, the number of Chinese ventures increased by more than 150 per cent from 1913 to 1920. The industrial work force doubled. Factory capital grew 50 per cent. But the increase in the number of factories greatly exceeded that of investments and of the work force. This was the specific feature of the development of capitalism in China in those years. Its growth derived from a proliferation of chiefly small-scale enterprises.

The wartime situation postponed, and in some cases totally stopped, the replacement of lower capitalistic forms of enterprise by higher forms—manufactories by factories, and home work by manufactories, the more backward capitalistic forms also enjoying favourable conditions. All those years, capitalism in China thrived chiefly as a system of distributed home work. The advantages of home work, accentuated by the wartime situation, granted a period of prosperity to that sort of commercial capital. But home work, too, witnessed certain technological improvements. The most important of these was the introduction of machine-tools made of metal, chiefly of foreign make, in place of the old wooden devices.

The favourable situation of 1915-1918 gave impulse to the growth of manufactories into factory-type enterprises or semi-factories. They were better equipped with engines and machines, this retooling being hastened by the inflow of capital. The new economic climate and the temporary consolidation of the monetary sphere furthered the transfer of the old usury capital, including that of *shenshi* and landlords, into industry, especially textiles—the home-work enterprises as well as centralised ventures. Local merchants,

landlords, and *shenshi* started a variety of manufactories, prompted by different motives in various regions, and, among other things, by the resettlement of large landowners (*shenshi* included) from villages to towns.

The Chinese bourgeoisie, merchants, and landlords, and above all *shenshi*, were more active than they had ever been. More than 600 companies or 50 per cent more than in the previous eight years, were newly registered between 1912 and 1919. Yet average assets per company went down to less than half owing to the shortage of equipment and the massive involvement of small and medium traders.

The most salient feature at the time was the rush into industry of merchant capital. Previously, industrialists came mainly from the bureaucratic milieu, from among *shenshi* and compradores. In the period under review, however, merchants and traders began investing heavily in factories and workshops. The tendency was particularly apparent in cotton. Cotton, cotton yarn, and cotton goods merchants became the biggest shareholders in the newly opening cotton mills. This caused certain structural changes, with the gaping chasm between the elitist bourgeois groups and the grassroot strata of entrepreneurs closing slightly.

Industrial growth was rounded out by a considerable expansion of national capital in the sphere of credits. The capital of domestic banks nearly doubled. The concentration of commercial capital grew swiftly. The assets of trading companies tripled, and the accumulated securities went up sixfold. Similarly impressive were the advances made in this period (1913-1918) by the national shipping companies, whose number climbed steeply. In its 'golden age', the Chinese bourgeoisie visibly gained economic muscle. By 1920, the national sector numbered more than 1,700 enterprises of the factory type, and as many as 1,200 mixed commercial and industrial firms. The total capital of the registered enterprises—industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural, and so on—doubled.

Additional advantages, alongside those of the 'golden age', were gained by the Chinese bourgeoisie through the anti-Japanese boycott of 1915 and the movement 'in support of domestically produced goods'. The seven months of boycott (February to September), for example, reduced Japanese imports by a third against the early half of 1914. The anti-Japanese campaign also affected the commercial and industrial activity of Japanese nationals in China itself. Some Japanese enterprises (not only in China, but in Japan as well), dependent on the China trade, closed down. Chinese merchants and entrepreneurs benefited greatly, with the boycott helping them to increase their own sales. In short, the anti-Japanese movement of 1915, along with the movement 'in support of domestically produced goods', stimulated the establishment of many new enterprises

that made use of the transient, artificially created demand.

The time of the war witnessed a proliferation of 'trading societies' (*shanghui*) and of their memberships. These basic unions of entrepreneurs absorbed the officials, merchants, medium traders, and the elite of the commercial, artisan, and money-lenders' guilds (*hang, bang, huiguan, yahang*) who were steadily swelling the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

The national bourgeoisie also took in rural elements. The exodus of *shenshi* and other landlords to the towns led to their involvement in commerce and enterprise, and naturally in the activity of 'trading societies'. Concurrently, rent-receivers who had stayed in the villages were also going bourgeois—buying up crops and raw materials, setting up rural workshops, manufactories, and shops, hiring farm labourers and journeymen, investing in various agricultural companies, notably companies developing wasteland. The total share capital of these land development firms, by the way, went up as much as 50 per cent during the war years. Besides, landlords were inclined to transfer their accumulations to banks in the cities. The growth of cash cropping and the conversion of rural home crafts into larger enterprises impelled stratification within the peasant milieu, with prosperous farms evolving gradually into kulak homesteads. The 'golden age' stimulated an inflow of commercial capital into rural crafts. Small and petty entrepreneurs—jobbers, home work agents, middlemen, owners of village workshops, traders in raw materials, and village agents of urban firms—grew in number and gained some strength. Though all these new developments did not undermine the feudal pillars of rural life, they became an important contributing element, along with the 'agrarian renovation', of the war-time state of affairs.

As a result of the Xinhai revolution, of the 'golden age', and the mass movement of 1915, there appeared a social group contiguous with the bourgeoisie: a new type of military officer and the new intelligentsia, notably students of higher and secondary schools. These were people who were influenced by the moods of the bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie, too, artisans and small traders, became more active, and participated single-mindedly in the anti-Japanese boycott.

The war-time economic boom also stimulated the growth of new, highly mobile urban groups. The commercial and industrial Chinese bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and intelligentsia, hoped that the favourable economic situation would go on and on, and nourished illusions of China's foreign positions improving after the war. They were resolved to make the internal situation in the country sounder. These strata and classes had only just gone through a bourgeois revolution. They had taken an active part in it, and were therefore more sensitive than before to any encroachments on China's na-

tional interests and to the conduct of affairs by local reactionaries, who were neither able nor willing to stand up for the country's sovereignty. The revolution and the effects of the world war changed the political mentality of Chinese society. Great-Han chauvinism intertwined with the bourgeois chauvinism of an oppressed nation. Yet, as the war dragged on, hopes of China's regeneration as an independent and flourishing state, began to crumble.

The extraordinary expansion of Japanese imperialism, including economic expansion, which had only marginally affected life in China before the war, became the sign of the times. Japan's geographical proximity and its military and financial power made the conditions especially favourable for a Japanese offensive in China.

From 1916 on, and so for a number of years, Japan became the main importer of goods to China, and Japanese-owned industry the main competitor and adversary of China's national industry, that is, of the local bourgeoisie and the *shenshi*, precisely in the prosperous years of the 'golden age'. Recovering from the 1915 boycott, Japan greatly increased imports to China of cotton fabrics and yarn, sugar, paper, and a number of other highly competitive items. The temporary 'absence' of European goods in the China market, especially from 1914 to 1917, could be described as an opportunity for the national bourgeoisie to consolidate. On the other hand, the Japanese offensive, and to a less degree that of the Americans, was a tangible menace to China's industrial 'revival'. Even before the war was over it all but put paid to such revival. But the invasion of Japanese capital, filling the vacuum left by the former 'masters' of the China market, could not completely eliminate the resultant breaches and commodity shortages. It did, however, reduce the opportunities that had appeared for the Chinese bourgeoisie during the war. What made matters worse was that the succession of the so-called Nishihara loans augmented China's financial and political dependence on Japan.

The Chinese bourgeoisie, accustomed to the pressure of the old, 'traditional' plunderers which the British, French, and Belgians had been since the middle of the 19th century, accustomed to feeding on the left-overs from their table, accustomed to fearing their joint power, looked upon the new predator with grave apprehensions. The steep growth of Japanese commerce and enterprise spelled competition and rivalry, and reduced the field for the Chinese bourgeoisie, doubly so because this was happening in the setting of a 'golden age'.

The bourgeois strata in China were spurred to still greater activity by the gradual deterioration of economic opportunities when the world war ended in 1918, and the competition of European commodities began to intensify. Slowly but surely, the 'golden age' of the Chinese economy was receding into the past.

The substantial changes in the market that began in 1918-1920 resulted from the following factors: the competition of foreign commodities grew, the price of certain Chinese primary goods went up and affected local textile mills most of all, and tea and some other Chinese exports failed to regain their pre-war level. The manual enterprises of the textile industry were hit worst of all. This had a debilitating effect for the great mass of petty and medium traders and entrepreneurs. Landlords and *shenshi*, who had invested heavily in this field, were also badly injured. Growing imports and the competition of Western and Japanese industrialists affected manual enterprises in many other fields of Chinese industry. Bankruptcies and closures became commonplace.

The decline in factory industry was, by and large, of the same origin. It only came later, in 1920 and 1921, though signs of it, a gradual deterioration of opportunities, did appear some time before. The Chinese bourgeoisie, thriving on large profits all through the war, was now complaining about the higher price of raw materials, the higher cost of production, about losses, and forced closure of enterprises.

The rude awakening nourished embitterment, spurring the bourgeoisie to action, specifically anti-foreign action. In sum, the economic recession of the early 1920s became part of the process that generated the revolution of 1925-1927.

From 1918 on, when the war-time 'golden age' was running to its close, the organic weakness of the lower type capitalist enterprise again made itself felt as forcefully as in the past. In addition, there was the burden to be carried of the internal transit duty, the *liqin*, and other extortions, which had been far less injurious during the economic boom.

Alongside the positive effects of the Xinhai revolution on Chinese society, the negative aspects began to surface with ever greater impact, because the revolution had opened the way to local warlordism. The old-time passive provincial regionalism changed into a system of self-sufficient warlord domains. The state of the domestic market was badly affected by feuds and political tensions now in one now in another province, and the situation deteriorated more gravely still with the outbreak of the civil war between North and South in 1917. The rule of militarist cliques and the internecine wars between them backed by foreign imperialist powers, were an appalling calamity for the people, including the bourgeoisie, but most of all the working people. During the world war period, warlord armies had swelled out of all proportion, and military items in the national and provincial budgets grew accordingly, causing the tax pressures on the population to increase. All this made the protest movement, focussed on imperialism and its local henchmen, increasingly more acute.

By 1919, the situation grew exceedingly complicated. The economic decline, the stepped-up expansion of the Japanese, and the gradual 'return' to China of the European imperialist powers again, as in 1915, faced society and the national bourgeoisie with the old challenge of protecting the 'Chinese' from the 'foreign'. The bourgeoisie needed a new patriotic, nationalist campaign that would help it, if only temporarily, to secure a protectionist situation for the underdeveloped Chinese capitalism. The social and economic boom of wartime had in many ways prepared the ground for social unrest at a new level. The bourgeoisie had gone through the revolution of 1911-1913. By the end of the world war it had expanded quite considerably. More, the 'golden age' had given it economic muscle. It had absorbed the large stratum of urban and rural petty bourgeois, who reacted just as sensitively to the increasing pressure of Japanese capital and the 'return' of European capital. As a result, the bourgeoisie was grown to the task of repeating the campaign of 1915 on a still larger scale during the May Fourth movement of 1919.

The May Fourth movement, however, was not a mere 'new edition' of the anti-foreign campaigns and boycotts of 1905-1908 nor a repetition of 1915. It stood apart not only in scale, but also in nature. In many ways, this was determined by the participation in it of the proletariat. This participation of the workers in political struggle was also largely traceable to the industrial boom of the 'golden age'. The Chinese working class had grown in numbers during the period of boom, 1915-1919. By the time the world war ended, it had expanded into a force to be reckoned with. The changes in China's economic, social, and political life that resulted from the world war, quickened the pulse of political life. The anti-imperialist protest was more deliberate and articulate. The social-economic development of China at the time of the economic boom, the anti-Japanese boycott of 1915, the May Fourth movement of 1919, and the upswing of the labour movement confirmed Lenin's words that 'one of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates capitalist development in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression'.¹

There was bitter disappointment among the advanced sections of Chinese society over the results of the war. They had been full of illusions, which were fostered by the Xinhai revolution and the 'golden age'. The expectations of the bourgeoisie, for one thing, collapsed like a house of cards. The unequal treaties of old that the Chinese had hoped the West would nullify as part of the war settlement remained in force, and the opportunities for broad economic enterprise that could have arisen proved a vain dream. Hopes that the state could help the bourgeoisie secure postwar growth and prosperity, turned out to be futile. An acute collision was brewing

between the interests of the more dynamic segments of Chinese society—the national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, students, and working class—and the interests of the imperialist powers and Chinese reactionaries headed by the Beiyang and other warlord cliques. A new wave of political struggle rose in the twenties, leading up to the revolution of 1925-1927.

The conditions gradually ripened for a new kind of revolution, namely, an anti-imperialist national revolution. The anti-imperialist orientation of the Xinhai revolution, we may recall, had been muted and moderate. After the world war, anti-imperialism clearly became one of the two main objectives of the struggle. Now that the monarchy had fallen, Chinese society faced the challenge of further renovating the state so as to speed up the country's modernisation, and curb the exploitation of China by the imperialist system. National sovereignty had to be restored at all costs.

These objectives brought about a united front of the national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, and working class. The storm waves of the revolution of 1925-1927 were on the rise.

The discontent felt by the bulk of Chinese society over the results of the Xinhai revolution had surfaced already in its concluding stages. The victory of the republic over the monarchy could not resolve all the pressing and explosive contradictions that tormented China in the early 20th century. After the 1911-1913 revolution had fulfilled its historical, albeit limited, mission, the time had come to shake off imperialist domination and end the power of local reaction. The period of the world war and the events that followed showed that the Beiyang government and the social groups behind it had picked up the practices of the deposed Manchu regime, and thereby obstructed the country's independent development and its deliverance from foreign dictation.

No massive onslaught on the Beiyang regime was possible in the wake of the Xinhai revolution, and this for a number of reasons. First, the revolutionary situation had been relieved for a time. After the upheavals of 1911-1913, the country was in bad need of some respite. Second, the true face of the Beiyang clique was not yet fully known. Third, the democratic forces behind the Chinese revolution were not yet ready for its next stage. They needed time to re-form ranks, to consolidate, to augment their numbers, and revise the programme of struggle. Fourth, social change was essential to secure a new alignment of forces, that is, a certain material base for a new political upsurge. Fifth, for a new anti-imperialist wave to rise new acts of violence by the powers in China were needed, along with external stimulators such as the consequences of the world war and the impact of the October Revolution in Russia.

The period of the war was for China the initial phase of prepara-

tion for a new upswing of the struggle for national liberation and social progress. The beginning of the 'agrarian renovation', the anti-Japanese campaign of 1915, the May Fourth movement of 1919, and the subsequent events were but instruments for a further political 'mobilisation' of Chinese society before its next revolutionary thrust. The preparation went on at various levels—political, ideological, cultural, as well as social-economic. And here the period of the war and the economic boom of 1915-1919 played a very big part. The 'golden age' and the associated growth of the bourgeoisie and proletariat fostered changes in the alignment of class forces. In 1911-1913, the hegemon of the revolution had been the *shenshi*-bourgeois bloc, while the bourgeoisie as such played second fiddle, whereas after the world war the bourgeoisie developed gradually into an independent force priming for the struggle that erupted in 1925. The period of the Xinhai revolution saw the working class in a secondary role within the anti-Qing opposition, whereas after the war the proletariat grew into an active and increasingly more conscious participant in the political struggle. The massive inflow of workers into the national liberation movement saw the democratic wave of the Chinese revolution rise to a new, higher level. And that was the most salient of the underlying factors that brought about the events of 1925-1927. This, in turn, reflected the growing influence on China of the socialist revolution in Russia and the consolidation of the world's first socialist state.

MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE

The closing stage of the medieval period in Chinese literature extends from the mid-17th to the early 19th century. The progressive tendencies in the culture of that time are sometimes described as early enlightenment, which reached maturity at the turn of the 20th century. The peasant war of Li Zicheng in the 1620s to 40s, and thereafter the nationwide resistance to the Manchus saw democratic and patriotic ideas taking deeper root in Chinese 17th- and 18th-century literature. The foremost scholars and literati of those days—Huang Zongxi (1610-1695), Gu Yanwu (1613-1682), Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) among others—berated the alien Manchu dynasty, autocratic monarchy in general, in philosophical, historical, and polemical treatises. 'The state is of the people, and is not the property of the emperor,' wrote Huang Zongxi. 'The prosperity or downfall of the Celestial Empire depends on the common people', Gu Yanwu concurred. Apart from the works of the above authors and their followers (Tang Zhen, Dai Zhen, etc.), the spirit of rebellion was sustained throughout the Qing era (1644-1912) by such anti-Manchu books as *Ten Days in Yangzhou* by Wang Xiuchu, and *Sack of the Town of Jiading* by Zhu Zisu.

Out of the many patriotic poets of the mid-17th century, the greatest fame came to Gu Yanwu, Chen Zilong (1608-1647), who had founded the Deep Society (Ji she) at the end of the reign of the Ming, and the gifted youth Xia Wangchun (1631-1647), who perished at Chen's side in one of the many anti-Manchu risings.

*Autumn hills and autumn hills again,
The autumn rain envelops the countless peaks.
The day before we fought for the river's mouth,
Now we fight in the foothills.*

These words open Gu Yanwu's 'The Autumn Hills' (*Qiu shan*), wherein he laments that Chinese troops were being pushed deeper

and deeper into the interior. In his other verses, Gu extols people such as Shi Kefa who fought to the death against the Manchu invaders (in the cycle *Laments*). Criticism and accusation ring out in his poetry, which, in this sense, is a worthy successor to the tradition of Tang and Song poetry:

*A guest came from the south,
Brought me a letter...
Lines crowding one another,
Every character a tear or drop of blood.*

*I showed it to our men of substance,
They exchanged glances but dared not say a thing.
When rulers care only for themselves,
Can one hope for the land to thrive?*

'Two Wild Geese', 1671

At the junction of the 17th and 18th centuries, patriot poets were up against the orthodox line of literati who had attained high official posts under the Manchus and were devoted guardians of ancient canons and medieval classicism. They were followers of Wang Shizhen's 'theory of spirit and rhyme' (*shen yun zhishuo*), which elevated the art of writing to mystic heights that were ostensibly out of the reach of common mortals. Prominent among this school of poets were Qian Qianyi (1582-1664), Wu Weiye (1609-1671), and Wang Shizhen himself (1634-1711). By the mid-18th century, the calling of standard-bearer in official poetry passed to Shen Deqian (1673-1769), which, however, did not deter the Manchu authorities from subjecting him to posthumous disgrace for just one of his versified lines: '*Posing as red, you are not really red; you are of another clan, yet you call yourself king of flowers.*' This one line the Manchus interpreted as a hint that they were aliens who had no right to rule China. (The word 'red' could also have referred to Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the Ming dynasty which the Manchus had deposed, for the character of his surname stands for 'red'.)

Shen Deqian's posthumous disgrace was only one episode in what was known as the literary inquisition or the 'scriptural tribunals' (*wen ziyu*) whereby the Qing emperors, like their predecessors on the Dragon Throne, eliminated *shenshi* literati whom they held in disfavour and their entire families. Linguist and literary scholar Wang Xihou, compiler of an anthology of Chinese poetry, was executed in 1777, because in the foreword to his dictionary he had ignored the sacred ban on using the personal names of emperors. Twenty of his closest relatives were flung into gaol, and three of his sons and four grandsons were made slaves. Even the orthodox

poet Qian Qianyi was posthumously disgraced by the Qing for having lamented the fate of his motherland, and for denouncing the cruelty of the Manchus. At the close of the 18th century, in the reign of Emperor Qianlong, the poet's works were consigned to a bonfire.

The Qing emperors had recourse to other traditional means, apart from tribunals, to keep Chinese *shenshi* from engaging in political activity and seditious thinking. The chief among these means was the distribution of official posts through civil service examinations at which candidates were required to demonstrate their loyalty to the ruling dynasty and their knowledge of the Confucian dogma. Another method was to enlist scholars in the compilation of mammoth works, such as the *Augustly approved complete collection of the four treasures* (1772-1782). These works, it is true, contributed eminently to Chinese philology, and have preserved for us a large number of the historical, philosophical, and polite writing of remoter ages, though often in a falsified version. A large number of Chinese literati fell prey to this Manchu policy, and among them Ji Yun (1724-1805), whose didactic novels indicate that their author had been a high official (and editor of the above-mentioned *complete collection*).

To be sure, in the 18th century, too, there were men bold enough to protest against the obtaining state of affairs. One of them was philosopher and writer Dai Zhen (1724-1777), who contrary to the neo-Confucian ethic of the Middle Ages considered human desire not a sin, but a celebration of the human spirit: 'Their so-called natural or ethical law (*li*) is the same as the criminal code is in the hands of cruel officials: both are used to put people to death.'

Similar ideas are found in the works of Yuan Mei (1715-1797), the eminent poet and novelist, who opposed epigonic imitation of the ancients and who declared like the progressive writers of the late Ming era that the main purpose of literati was 'to write of their own souls'. 'The feelings of poets now,' Yuan Mei wrote, 'are not at all the same as those in Tang and Song times. Indeed, they are hostile to the old feelings, because in our breast burn feelings of our country's doom, not feelings of sweetness and content!' These words were backed up by his exalted verse about the 12th century national hero Yue Fei, who had fought the invading Jurchids in the north of China. But the bulk of the poet's literary legacy consists of lyric poetry and humorous novels.

In the early Qing era, the Chinese novel rose to a high level of excellence, mainly by virtue of the works of Pu Songling (1640-1715), an offspring of an impoverished *shenshi* family who had repeatedly failed civil service examinations. He was fond of portraying supernatural beings, though often also the facts as they were in his time. The brilliant stylist ridiculed his contemporary society,

depicting the incompetence and cruelty of officials, and extolling true love. Not surprisingly, the works of Pu Songling abound in censors' deletions. Foxes, who figure prominently in his fairy-tales, are contrasted by their courage to the cowardly 'learned men', and often help the author to show the rich potentialities of human nature. 'If there is a living and strong spirit in a man, then the devil or the fox—what can they do to him?' wrote Pu in the afterword to his tale 'How He Seized the Fox and Shot at the Devil'.

The 18th century saw no substantial additions to these incisive and amazingly complete tales. Only at the end of the century there appeared collections of stories whose authors—Yuan Mei, Ji Yun, and Tu Shen (1744-1801)—endeavoured to pick up the tradition of Pu Songling. In *New Qi Jokes* (*Xin qi xie*), Yuan Mei is little more than an entertainer, while Ji Yun in his *Notes from the Hut of an Observer of Trifles* (*Yue wei caotang biji*) inclines to didacticism. Still, both of them, like Tu Shen in his *Small Talk from Liuhe County*, took veiled jabs at society. 'In recent times,' wrote Wu Woyao, the eminent prose writer of the early 20th century, 'some people have begun to call Pu Songling a great writer who advocated nationalism and expulsion of foreign invaders. In their opinion, the foxes in *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* are a thrust at the Manchus, because the words "fox" (*hu*) and "barbarian" (*hu*) sound alike: all the adultery and mischief committed by the foxes are filled with allegorical meaning. If this is so, then *Notes from the Hut of an Observer of Trifles* by Ji Yun ought still more definitely to be considered a parable, because there the foxes are mostly installed in official departments.'

The Chinese historical novel made further advances at the close of the 17th and in the early 18th century, dealing mainly with two seditious topics: the insurgents of the famous 14th-century novel *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) and the warrior Yue Fei, fighter against Jurchid invaders. The former subject is vividly treated in Chen Chen's *Latter-Day Water Margin* (*Shuihu houzhuan*, late 17th century), and the second in Qian Cai's novel, *The Tale of Yue Fei* (*Shuo Yue quanzhuan*, early 18th century). By the mid-18th century, however, the heroic novel is almost completely driven off the scene by the social: the splendid novel of Wu Jingzi (1701-1754)—*The Unofficial History of the Literati* (*Rulin waishi*), which is a powerful satire on the vices of the examination system, and Cao Xueqin's (1722-1763) excellent *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng*), which is a panoramic portrayal of the life of a Chinese 'upper class' feudal family. Still, the tight Manchu censorship prevented writers from openly exposing the vices of the times. That is probably why the satire of the late 18th and the early 19th century, just as at the turn of the 17th, donned the garb of fantasy. The writer Li Baichuan,

strongly influenced by Wu Jingzi resorted to supernatural characters in his novel *Footprints of Immortals in the Green Fields* (*Lü ye xian zong*, late 18th century) to mock feudal lords, protest against forced marriages, and commiserate with the lot of prostitutes in houses of ill fame. Li Ruzhen's novel, *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jing hua yuan*, early 19th century) is of still greater merit. A peculiar *Gulliver's Travels* on Chinese soil, it employed allegory to come to grips with feudalistic bigotry and the downtrodden state of Chinese women.

To the same period dates the 'scholarly novel', which is a reflection of the enlightened though brutal era of Emperor Qianlong and the Manchu campaigns against Chinese popular uprisings. The most representative of these novels are Xia Jinqu's (1706-1787) *Idle Speeches of a Village Sage* (*Ye sou pu yan*), and *The Tale of a Book-worm* (*Tan shi*) by Tu Shen.

The end of the 17th century saw three great dramatists: Li Yu (1591-1671), Hong Sheng (1646-1704), and Kong Shangren (1648-1718). All of them were of modest station, and bitterly opposed to the Manchu regime. Li Yu, in his play *Ten Thousand Li Away* (*Wan li yuan*) elaborated on the Confucian theme of filial piety (son goes looking for his father), but also dwelled on patriotic ideas (for the play is set in the troubled time of the Manchu conquest). In another play, 'The Buffalo's Head' (*Niu toushan*), he sings the praises of Yue Fei. Hong Sheng's popular drama 'The Palace of Eternal Youth' (*Changsheng dian*) is a poetic play built on a traditional plot—the tragic love story of the Tang emperor Ming-huang and his concubine Yang Guifei—in which the author called attention to various socially acute aspects of the case, such, for example, as the distress it caused people to bring the emperor's sweetheart the exotic fruit of a South China plant, *lizhi*. Kong Shangren devoted his famous drama, *The Peach-Blossom Fan* (*Tao hua shan*), to the patriotic poet Hou Fangyu who had for long refused to submit to the Manchus.

By the 18th century, Chinese drama shed most of its ideological and artistic integrity. The then popular dramatist Jiang Shiquan (1726-1784), who had extolled national hero Wen Tianxiang in one play (*The Evergreen Tree*), was also in the habit of piling on praise on those Chinese who had reconciled themselves to the Manchu yoke (the plays *Man in the Snow*, *Frost in the Brown Grove*). Yang Chaoguan (1712-1791) devoted his plays to the officialdom, and was excessively didactic, which quality, as we know, was present not only in medieval, but also in the literature of the enlightenment period. Elements of didacticism are present, for example, in Yang's drama *Temple of the Money God*, which depicts the ancient poet Ruan Ji berating the god of wealth and, in effect, sideswipes the

Qing rulers:

*You readily thrust valuables on the draconian
(i.e. imperial—V.S.) palaces,
Letting their inmates pin flowers on brocade.
While the poor you force to sell their children
In payment of their debts,
Consigning them to those all-powerful houses
Where ponds run wine and towers are of meat!*

The crisis of the Chinese drama, partial though it was, could be traced to the obsolescence of the traditional theatre prevalent at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century: the 'kunshan drama' (*kun qu*; the designation 'tales of wonder'—*chuan qi*—was also applied to novelettes) and 'mixed plays' (*za ju*). Their language and melodies sounded archaic even to educated *shenshi*, let alone the general public, which was enamoured of the folkloric 'local drama' (*difang xi*). Late in the 18th century, local companies are known to have come for long stays to Beijing, where they had close contacts with performers of the officially recognised genres. That is how the 'metropolitan drama' (*jing xi*) came into being which, popular right up to the 20th century, democratised the musical, choreographic, and, indeed, the ideological content of the Chinese theatre. A good sample of 'metropolitan drama' is the play *Fisherman's Revenge* (*Dayu sha jia*), which gained popularity in the early 19th century. Among its leading characters is the *Water Margin* hero—Xiao En, who slays the family of a landlord for suddenly deciding to impose a fishery tax. Laying the emphasis on 'war plays' (*wu xi*), the nameless 'metropolitan drama' authors seemed to underscore the special importance of heroic traditions and raised martial scenes to the level of highly accomplished dances. The 'metropolitan drama' also encompassed quite a few magnificent 'civic plays' (*wen xi*), among them *Autumn River* (*Qiu jiang*), an elegant and witty tableau.

The time before and during the opium wars witnessed a revival of progressive prose and poetry as represented by Gong Zizhen, Lin Zexu, Wei Yuan, and others. They still wrote in the old literary style, were faithful devotees of orthodox Confucianism, but in many of their works anticipated ideas that became current at the end of the 19th century. In articles which he wrote in 1815 and 1816: 'A Warning', 'On Equality', and 'Politics and Science', Gong Zizhen, for example, predicted the collapse of authoritarian rule, called for a just redistribution of land, and suggested that science and politics should be harmonised. The distinguished statesman and patriot Lin Zexu produced an important book on the geography of Western lands, *Description of the Four Continents* (1840). His 'Draft of an

Appeal to the Queen of Britain' (1839) and his 'Secret Memorial to the Emperor on Not Relaxing Efforts in Foreign Matters' (1841) displayed his extraordinary power of expression.

Wei Yuan, a younger contemporary and friend of Gong Zizhen and Lin Zexu, also ranks among the earliest propagators of 'Western science'. He used Lin Zexu's gazetteer to produce a more comprehensive *Geographic Description of Overseas Countries* (1846), the foreword to which was a vivid political pamphlet.

In 1830, eager to portray China's sad plight through poetry, Gong Zizhen, Lin Zexu, Wei Yuan, and others formed the Poetic Society for Enlightening the South. In his 'Verse Written in the Year Yihai', 'On Historical Subjects', and other works, Gong Zizhen focussed attention on the corruption of the officialdom, the brutal Manchu censorship, the harm of opium-smoking, and the desperate state of the hunger-stricken people. On the whole, however, lyrical verse, often love poetry (e.g., *I Write of Desire*) burdened with pessimistic overtones, is more typical of his poetic legacy. Progressive ideas were much more vividly present in the poetry of Wei Yuan, with patriotic verse holding the central place ('Opium', and so on). Similar verse came from Lin Zexu's brush (e.g., 'Reply to Zong Dilou Written in Imitation of His Verse'), and from that of Zhang Weiping (1780-1859), author of poems about the braves who did battle against the British: 'Sanyuanli', 'Song of Three Generals', etc.

Chinese prose and poetry benefited greatly from the literary endeavours of the Taipings. While works that appeared shortly before the 'self-strengthening' period, though liberal in spirit, found their readers mainly among the 'upper classes', the 'edicts' and 'instructions' of Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864), chief of the Taipings, were essentially revolutionary and addressed to the mass reader or listener. A good example is Hong's *Instruction on the True Way for the Reawakening of the World* (1845), in which he blended elements of the Christian teaching with traditional utopian ideas of 'universal equality', using them to good purpose against the Manchu regime and Confucianism.

The poetry which came from the brush of Taiping leaders as well as ordinary braves, is also of some note. Of special merit in artistic quality and forceful social resonance is the verse of Hong Xiuquan himself. In the beginning, Hong wrote in the archaic style, then turned to a more comprehensible colloquial language. This point may be illustrated by comparing his 'Song of the True Way of Saving the World' with a later poem, 'Let's Destroy the Fiends!'

Owing to the diverse social origins of the Taiping leaders, their diverse individual traits, and so on, Taiping poetry is highly varied in style, content, and merit. Shi Dakai (1831-1863), for example,

had been an educated man and even had the academic degree of *juren*. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that his *Verse Inscribed on the Wall of the White Dragon Cave*, which is one of the few of his works that have come down to us, sounds more literary and is more individualistic than, say, the verse of former coal carrier Yang Xiuqing (1823-1864), 'We're Certainly Faithful and Bold', which sounds more like a cheerful popular rhyme:

*We, brothers and sisters, are faithful,
Like Zhao of Changshan strong in spirit.
Holding high the banner of rebellion,
We fought millions of battles.
Soon, we will enter the capital, and the people
Will call us their heroes!*

The verse mentions Zhao Yun, hero of Luo Guanrong's popular novel, *The Three Kingdoms* (14th century).

The Taipings also wrote prose and drama, but only a small portion of that has come down to us, notably *The Truthful Tale of the Beginning of the Rising*, signed with the surname 'Zeng'.

Of unquestionable importance for Chinese literature was the decree banning hollow and fanciful words drawn up by the Taiping leaders Hong Rengan and Meng Shiyong in 1861. The epigonic feudal literature against which the decree was directed, was represented at the time by the Tongcheng school and Song poetry. The former was initiated in the 17th century by Fangbao and Yao Nai, natives of Tongcheng county, Anhui, who wrote a succession of philosophical works and made elegant landscape studies. But by the mid-19th century the school degenerated. At its head stood Zeng Guofan, arch enemy of the Taipings. He cast off the academic principles of the founders of the Tongcheng school concerning the correlation of Confucian 'sense' and 'method', and called on literati to dedicate themselves to serving their rulers. Zeng Guofan, it is true, tried to make the Tongcheng approach more flexible in questions of style and in the form of conveying Confucian ideas. 'Do not fail to follow the way (*dao*) shown by ancient literature (*gu wen*),' he harangued, 'but it is wrong to moralise (*shuo li*).' This held up the mirror to Zeng Guofan's political thinking. He pitted not only orthodox Confucianism against the Taipings, but, indeed, also modern European arms, the policy of 'self-strengthening', and the 'borrowing of overseas matters'.

In the early 1870s there appeared an unofficial press among whose editors and publishers were members of the nascent bourgeois intelligentsia, Wang Tao and Rong Hong, who had both been abroad, and who criticised China's backwardness and called insistently for reform. In 1888, Kang Youwei's daring memorial to the emperor

launched him, head of reformists, on his journalistic activity. Together with his disciples, Liang Qichao and Mai Menghua, he wrote the well-known Collective Memorial (1895) when the Qing Empire was defeated in its war against Japan. Kang made a deep impression on his contemporaries with his philosophical treatises, *Study of Confucius' Reform of the State System* (1897) and the *Book on Great Unity* (1884-1902), etc. In the latter, the author made use of the Confucian egalitarian theory in some ways close to the ideas of the peasant socialism preached by Hong Xiuquan. But as distinct from the Taiping leader, Kang was incomparably more attached to Confucianism and wanted to attain an era of Great Unity by peaceful rather than revolutionary means. The left-wing reformer Tan Sitong (1865-1898) re-interpreted Confucius in a much more radical way. In a treatise which he entitled *Doctrine of Humanity* (1896-1898), he took traditional Confucian notions as a starting point in his plea for 'equality' and 'democracy', and challenged the authority of the Qing dynasty. More strikingly still Tan presented his views in letters to his friends.

Out of the many reformist periodicals of 1895-1898, special mention should be made of the *Shiwubao*, a journal published every ten days by Liang Qichao, poet and journalist Huang Zonxian (1848-1905), and others. In the foreword to his treatise 'On the Masses' (1896), Liang urged all estates in China to join hands and fight for reform. Mai Menghua contributed a radical article, 'On Finding Ways to Win Over and Use Secret Societies' (1897), recommending that reformers should recognise and co-operate with other opposition groups, including Sun Yatsen's Revive China Society.

Following the reactionary palace revolution of 1898, Liang Qichao moved to Japan and launched the journal *Qingyibao*, elaborating a vernacular style comprehensible to the general reader. It was based on the use of colloquialisms, barbarisms, and emotional repetitions, and was nonetheless as logical and didactic as were all the writings of the enlighteners. Liang's well-known 'Speech on Young China' (1900), for example, stigmatised the old Chinese empire and called on everyone to fight bravely for the country's better future. Then Liang reverted to the history of the nation, again censured the 'old empire', and mocked the ignorance and vileness of the bureaucracy. 'All the power in the country is possessed by old and worthless people,' he wrote. 'If for several tens of years you have not laboured on eight-legged essays, if you have not served as messenger-boy, not fawned on your superiors, not asked of your chief's health, and not kowtowed, you will never become an official or win promotion.'

The first specimens of revolutionary writing—pamphlets and addresses of the Revive China Society led by Sun Yatsen and Lu

Haodong—appeared at the end of the 19th century.

Progressive Chinese poetry climbed new heights in the last thirty years of the 19th century. In his early verse about the Taiping rebellion, which he wrote at the age of 18 in 1865, the poet Huang Zonxian referred to the ravages that were visited on his country by foreign invaders, and wrote of the courage of some of the rebels (though he referred to them mainly as unruly mutineers who, like the invaders, upset the peace). The painful consequences of the opium wars, and the slavish policy of the Manchu court were the topic of his 'Hongkong Impressions' (1870). In 1876, Huang Zonxian was sent to Japan as a member of the first Chinese embassy. The verses of that period ('Song of the Cherry Blossoms', 'Patriots', etc.) were reflections on the lot of the peoples of the Orient, and some were incisively satirical diatribes against the colonialists. The anti-colonial theme is strikingly presented in his *American cycle* ('Mutiny of Students Studying in America', 'Banished Guests', and 'Chronicles'), most of which was written in San Francisco where Huang served as Qing consul-general in the early 1880s.

In the late 80s and early 90s, during his diplomatic missions to Britain and Singapore, Huang wrote verse about the Sino-French war of 1884-1885 ('Passing Saigon', 'Song About General Feng'), about Buddhism, which had paved the way for the British colonialists ('The Sleeping Buddha of Ceylon', a poem), and about the humiliating condition of Chinese emigrants in Malaya ('Emigrants', a poem). One of the finest contributions to modern Chinese poetry are Huang's verses about the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895: 'I Grieve for Pyongyang', 'Woe Unto Thee, Port Arthur', 'Song of the General Who Laid Down His Arms', and others. Apart from a natural concern for the destiny of his homeland, they expressed the poet's distaste for war which, as a rule, brought nothing but suffering.

After the reactionary palace revolution of 1898, Huang was banished to a village, but did not abandon his writing. His poetry of the early 19th century, depicting the Boxer Uprising and the abominations perpetrated by the imperialist armies in Beijing ('Clothing drenched in Chinese blood, prodding old men and children with their rifles, they led them to be shot'), is as all his previous poetry a reflection on the key events in the country's life. In some of his verses, as in 'The First Morn of the New Year 1900', Huang reflects on the destiny of the world, dreaming of the day when peace would at last prevail on Earth.

The left-wing reformer Tan Sitong was a gifted poet, too. In his early poetry, written when he resided on the border (1879-1890), he extolled the past victories of the Chinese ('In Western Land', 'Qinling Range'), and produced stirring pictures of nature ('Kongtong

Mountain'). At odds with the refined epigonic poetry of his time, Tan turned to folkloric themes (the ballads 'Virtuous', 'Spectre', 'Three Faithful Couples', 'Wonderful Stone'). Tan's involvement in the reform movement was naturally mirrored in his writing. In a poem written on Jian Biao's painting, 'Confucius Composes a Book', Tan ridiculed Confucian scholars for turning their backs on political struggle. In his 'Song of the Opium Poppy and a Rice Sack' and 'Song of How They Carried Provisions Over the Hills of Liupanshan', he exposed the misdeeds of the colonialists in China in gay and scathing popular rhymes, and attacked the brutal feudal exploitation of the peasantry. Even his landscape sketches ('Tongguan Picket', 'Willows on the Edge of the Road', etc.) speak of the poet's yearning for freedom. Nature, as he portrayed it, dreams of liberty and 'cannot soothe its anguish'.

In September 1898, Tan Sitong was thrown into gaol, and beheaded a few days later. The verses he wrote on the wall of his prison cell before the execution, expressed the hope that his cause would be carried on. The verse of Huang Zonxian and Tan Sitong may be described as the 'extension of the revolution to poetry' which Xia Zengyou (1861-1924) and Tan Sitong had proclaimed in 1897 and which was later continued by other revolutionary poets.

At the time, new tendencies surfaced in the 'low prose' (*xiaoshuo*), though its leading topics right up to the end of the 19th century were the same as before—adventure and love. Among the finest Chinese adventure novels of the 19th century were Wen Kang's *Narrative of Heroes and Heroines* (*Ernü yingxiong zhuan*) and Shi Yukun's *The Brave Three and the Five Just* (*San xia wu yi*), both dating to the 1870s. The first novel is about two young people, the youth An Ji and the girl He Yufeng, whose fathers had suffered at the hands of cruel dignitaries, while the second novel is a projection of the popular legends about Bao Zheng, the upright 11th-century judge who was helped by nine noble braves. Both novels were in spirit critical of the ills of the feudal society.

Facts from the life of Wen Kang and the story of how the above novels were circulated are evidence that the popularity of the adventure novel in the late 1870s and early 80s was tied up with the 'self-strengthening' policy. The failure of 'self-strengthening' and the reform movement caused a temporary decline of the adventure story in the late 90s, with popular novels (of knights and judges) degenerating into encomia for the Manchu officialdom (*A Common Folks Book of How the Sacred Qing Dynasty Has Entrenched Itself For Tens of Thousands of Years, The Cases of Judge Peng, Story of Everlasting Happiness and Untroubled Peace*, etc.).

Love novels, too, began changing at about the same time as those of adventure, but went much further. The excellent novel

of Yu Da, *Dream in the Blue Chamber* (*Qing lou meng*), which appeared in 1879, showed the suffering of women sold to brothel-keepers. The distinguished prose writer of the end of the 19th century, Han Bangqing, picked up the topic in his novel *Seaside Flowers* (*Hai shang hua*, 1892-1895), portraying the men who frequented those dens of iniquity, and showing the vileness of life in Shanghai at the time capitalism was fixing its grip on that port city. The writing of Han Bangqing, and his career as publisher (he published a journal, *Wonderful Coastal Books*, in 1892-1895) laid the ground for the novel exposing social evils and the literary periodicals of the early 20th century.

As the reformist and revolutionary movements gathered momentum, Western sociological writing and fiction, which literati close in outlook to the reformists—Yan Fu and Lin Shu—had started translating in the 1890s, began to win a wide readership. Special mention here should be made of their translations of Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (made in 1895-1897) and *La Dame aux Camélias* by Dumas fils (in 1898).

In the early 20th century, Yan Fu translated Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, followed in quick succession by Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*, William Stanley Jevons's *Elementary Lessons in Logic*, John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* and *On Liberty*, Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, and so on. In the meantime, Lin Shu, who was provided oral translations, prolifically produced renderings of Western prose in Chinese, notably of Swift, Defoe, Dickens, Washington Irving, Hugo, Dumas père, and so on. Liang Qichao, and the revolutionary poets Ma Junwu (1882-1940) and Su Manshu (1884-1918) acquainted Chinese readers with the poetry of Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Robert Burns, and the Chartist poet Thomas Good. Young Lu Xin (1881-1936), himself rising to eminence as political writer and novelist, also participated in popularising Western literature.

In the early 20th century, a highly progressive and instructive part was played by reformist writings appearing in Liang Qichao's journals *New People* and *New Prose*, launched in Japan in 1902 and promptly banned in China by the Manchu authorities. The first issue of *New Prose* carried Liang's famous article, 'The Link Between Prose and Democracy', which stimulated the emergence of the social novel. Literature also benefited from the democratic ideas spread by the journal *People*, organ of the Unity League, published by eminent journalist Zhang Taiyan. While advocating democratic content, Zhang was a conservative in the realm of form: he propagated the ancient refinements of style which were absolutely incomprehensible to the masses.

This contradiction in aesthetic approach also made itself felt in

the poetry of other revolutionary poets, who had forged into prominence and became determinative in Chinese poetry in the early 20th century. The poetry of Zhang Taiyan himself was of two kinds—one was ornate and flowery, imitating the style that had reigned under the Wei and Jin dynasties (3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries), the other plain, rousing verse as represented by his 'Songs About the Expulsion of the Manchus', 'Songs of the Revolution', or 'Prison Dedication to Zou Rong'. The latter poem was highly praised by Lu Xin, who eventually became the father of contemporary Chinese literature.

Qiu Jin (1875-1907), who was executed by the Manchus for her revolutionary activities, was a gifted poetess. In her younger years, especially before her marriage, she wrote tender and refined verse of swallows, fading chrysanthemums, and similar things, as was the custom among young Chinese women made to live the life of recluses. With the rise of the revolutionary movements, the young woman began writing angry, rebellious verse—'I Lament Hero Wu Yue', 'The Dagger', 'The Sword', 'Nameless', and so on. But even these finest of Qiu Jin's poems betray the weaknesses observed in most of the anti-Manchu poetry: the indeterminateness of the ideal, and an emotionally unhinged fascination in sacrificing on the altar of the national cause.

In 1909, the poets Chen Qubing (1874-1933), Gao Xu (1877-1925), Liu Yazhi (1887-1958) and others, formed in Suzhou the first revolutionary league of Chinese men of letters—the Southern Society (*Nanshe*). It was so called in honour of the early fighters against the Manchu yoke in South China, and was even described by some as the 'propaganda department' of the Unity League. Following the proclamation of the republic and Sun Yatsen's removal from the provisional presidency, members of the Southern Society, who were painfully aware of the moderate nature of the revolution, either despaired (as Su Manshu did), or attacked the triumphant reactionaries, marshalling people to continue the struggle:

*Wuchang is forgotten, blood flows everywhere,
Each year is a bearer of ill tidings.*

But the dead cry out,

Calling the living to battle, to bloody revenge!

(Liu Yazhi, 'I Heard with Pain of Ning
Tiaoyuan's Beastly Murder')

An important new current appeared in Chinese prose in the early 20th century. Later, Lu Xin would call it the 'novel of exposure'. Its moving spirit, Li Baojia (1867-1906), exposed corruption and the decay of the bureaucratic system (*Our Officialdom*), stigmatised the medieval torture practised in Chinese courts of law (*The Living Hell*),

and mocked the vain efforts of the ruling class to learn from the West (*Short History of Civilisation*). His close friend, writer Wu Woyao (1866-1910), delved into the power of money (*The Secret of Wealth*). Seeing the dislocation around him even more keenly than Li Baojia, Wu portrayed the conflict of an honest man and his environment, and showed the tragedy that inescapably befell virtue in that vile world (*The Strange Events of Twenty Years*).

Nearly all novelists saw foreign aggression as one of the causes of the unbearable situation in China. Zeng Pu's (1871-1935) novel, *Flowers in a Sea of Evil* (1905-1907) portrayed the grief of a country falling to pieces under the hammer blows of foreigners. The resulting picture was more than convincing. Zeng stripped bare the old-style scholars and the imperial court, while producing friendly portrayals of Russian Narodniks, Japanese revolutionaries, and followers of Sun Yatsen.

Among the other revolutionary prose writers, special mention should be made of Chen Tianhua (1875-1905), writer of fiery articles and of an unfinished novelette, *The Lion's Roar* (*Shizi kong*), which, to be sure, contained elements of chauvinism. Lu Xin did not produce his first original piece of prose until the time of the Xinhai revolution. His short story, 'Of Things Past' (*Huai jiu*), written in the first person, portraying a boy and containing recollections of popular risings and of the Taiping rebellion, was clearly inspired by the recent revolution.

The archaic theatre was obviously not what the awakening Chinese public wanted. In the early 20th century, the actor Wang Xiaonong (1858-1918) tried to reform the 'metropolitan drama', introducing contemporary plots and elements of foreign life which China was getting to know at the time. But the new content of Wang's plays came into collision with the traditional methods of the 'metropolitan drama'. The European style 'spoken drama' (*hua ju*) was a much more promising approach to enlivening the national theatre. It was first conceived at the end of the 19th century by students of missionary schools in Shanghai and Chinese students in Japan, but its inception is dated to 1907, when a Chinese theatrical society, the Spring Willow (*Chun liu she*), was founded in Japan and another, the Spring Sun (*Chun yang she*) in Shanghai.

Chinese students in Japan (Ouyang Yuqian, among others) had close ties with revolutionary emigrants, were better acquainted with foreign culture, and were therefore more resolute in demolishing old canons. Within twelve months, the Spring Willow Society spanned the distance from a production of *La Dame aux Camélias*, a sentimental tragedy, to that of *Prayer of the Black Slave* (an adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), whose rebellious spirit earned it the praise of Sun Yatsen's followers. Shortly there-

after, a member of the student company, Re Tianzhi, returned to China and produced *Prayer of the Black Slave* on the Shanghai stage.

At the time of the Xinhai revolution, the Spring Willow Society was renamed New Drama Association. More theatrical societies were founded, with the Progressive Company (*Jin hua tuan*) gaining prominence as a group that gravitated towards vividly topical subjects. Its drama, *Crane's Tower*, was devoted to the Wuchang uprising, and the play *Long Live the Republic!*, written soon after the liberation of Nanjing, portrayed the cowardly flight of Manchu officials from the city and included the scene of a lantern procession round a bronze statue of Sun Yatsen.

At the height of the anti-Yuan Shikai movement, new plays appeared attacking the usurper, such as *Selling the People* (*Guomin juan*), *Against Yuan* (*Fan Yuan*), and *Let's Punish Yuan* (*Tao Yuan*). The fight for a new theatre, taken up by non-professional dramatic groups even involved women and children. Foremost actors espoused the 'spoken drama', which was performed in various dialects, and turned their backs on the ornate, hard to understand language of the 'metropolitan drama'. But round about 1916, the 'spoken drama' forfeited its chief virtue—its keen social content. This metamorphosis was an effect of the general situation in the country.

After the defeat of the 1911-1913 revolution, Chinese literature was immersed in crisis, caused by Yuan Shikai's reign of terror, and the about-turn of writers (Xia Zengyou and others who had been progressive) and the disappointment among the best of them in bourgeois ideals (Su Manshu, Lu Xin). New currents surfaced, paving the way for the next stage in the history of Chinese literature.

Distinguished writers like Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan, who had for a time fallen under the influence of the reaction, tried to mend their fences when they saw what Yuan Shikai's dictatorship was costing the country. Zhang, whom Yuan Shikai imprisoned in 1914 to wrest from him consent to co-operate, wrote 'I'll sooner die' on the wall of his cell, making a strong impression on his contemporaries. In 1915, Liang Qichao published an article, 'A Rebuke to Prose Writers', which was the first of a series of attacks on the 'prose of intrigue' that was then in fashion.

Most members of the Southern Society, which had represented the most progressive section of Chinese poetry on the eve of and during the Xinhai revolution, were in the throes of a dark pessimism when Yuan Shikai succeeded in establishing his militarist regime.

All thoughts are entangled like hemp...

This flower alone sustains the withering autumn...

wrote Gao Xu in an 'Ode to the Chrysanthemum' in 1914. And Su Manshu in his 'Diverse Lines About Life in the East' injected a strain

of civic purpose into the prevailing gloom:

*When you meet people, forbear to ask how things are
in their world,*

*Our sorrow over the country's plight is so great,
that only tears flow.*

The 'novel of exposure' again gave place to love and adventure stories—the 'school of ducks and butterflies' that idealised the feudal family—and to the 'prose of intrigue' modelled on the worst kind of Western crime stories. The first of these two schools professed to be fighting moral corruption, and the latter to be exposing the bureaucrats. But by and large both trends were meant to entertain and spoke of a temporary decline that gripped Chinese literature after the defeat of the revolution.

The only prominent prose writer who did not succumb to the general despondency was Su Manshu. As early as 1912, he wrote an autobiographical novel, *The Lone Swan*, and followed this up with *Cherry-Coloured Tulle*, *The Burnt Sword*, *This Is No Dream*, *The Broken Hairpin*, and other novels. The last named was published in the progressive journal *Xin qingnian*, which was soon to begin the fight for a new culture.

Though Su Manshu's novels, written in the old literary language (i.e., in a more archaic style than the social novels of the early 20th century), failed to deal with the more burning issues of the time and were shot through with pessimism, they produced a whole gallery of characters (officials, capitalists, revolutionaries) and were set in a far wider range of countries (China, Japan, the South Seas) than other contemporary Chinese stories. The author's realistic appraisal of the crushing effects of religion and the power of money on true love did not detract from his claim to being one of China's first romantic writers.

For the democratic Lu Xin, who was first noticed during the Xinhai revolution following publication of his short story, 'Of Things Past', the years 1914 to 1917 were 'years of silence'. He took the failure of the revolution very close to heart, and was as yet unaware of the forces that could instil hope. The movement for 'literary reform', and soon also for 'literary revolution', launched by the journal *Xin qingnian* in 1917, did not at first arouse any response in Lu Xin. But when the journal changed to the vernacular in 1918, thereby living up to one of the key planks in its platform, Lu Xin gave it his short story, 'The Notes of A Madman', written under the influence of Gogol's novel of the same title. This story, as is universally recognised, spelled the end of the Chinese 'literature of the modern age'. Its inexorable realism paved the way to the national literature of present times.

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Chapter 18

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SOME CHINESE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

cheng—1/10 of the highest yield per 1 *mu* of land
dan—a liquid and dry measure (103.647 litres)
daqian—copper or brass coin of different denominations, equivalent to 2, 4, 5, 10—20, 50, 500 or 1,000 *wen*
dou—a liquid and dry measure (1/10 of *dan* or 10.35 litres)
jin—a measure of weight equivalent to 596.886 grammes (1 *jin*=16 *liang*=160 *qian*)
li—a measure of length (576 metres)
liang—a measure of weight (37.301 grammes) and a silver monetary unit
mu—a square measure (0.06 hectare)
qian—a measure of weight (3.7301 grammes) or a copper coin (see *wen*)
qing—a square measure equivalent to 100 *mu* or 6.144 hectares
wen (also *qian*, *fen*, *choh*)—copper coin
yuan—also Chinese dollar, a silver coin roughly equivalent to the Mexican dollar

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